

TWISTED METAL 2 GUIDE! WIN A £400 SNOWBOARD!

PLAYSTATION PRO

ISSUE 7 May 1997
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REBEL ASSAULT 2

LucasArts strikes back

5 EXPERT
OPINIONS ON
EVERY GAME

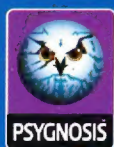
JONAH LOMU RUGBY
RAGE RAGER
PORSCHE CHALLENGE
TRANSPORT TYCOON
SPIDER

LOST VIKINGS 2 SPEEDSTER TENKA TOTAL NBA '97 ALLIED GENERAL



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Previews 64

64 Japanese Road Rage

Warning! THQ is threatening to release a game on the PlayStation. Thankfully, it's Jaleco's Tokyo Highway Battle

72 Out Come The Freaks

A new breed of interactive entertainment is (allegedly) on its way from GT Interactive. The question is, are you?

74 The Eight-Legged Groove Machine

BMG, the company that brought you Pandemonium and Legacy Of Kain, is about to get all incoy-wincey on us

76 If I Had A Hamill...

Wing Commander 4 stars Mark Hamill, the bloke who played Luke Skywalker in the Star Wars trilogy. Star Wars? Did someone mention Star Wars?

78 Celestial Scrap

Good old 3-D versus beat 'em-up genre, eh? It's officially the best. It isn't packed with loads of identical games. JVC proves a point in the afterlife

80 Inbetweeners

If Actua Soccer Club Edition was a song, it would be Inbetweeners by Sleeper. Go straight to the preview section now to find out why

82 The Final Frontier

Taking inspiration from the PC classics Tie Fighter and X-Wing, EA brings you Darklight Conflict - a fight over malfunctioning torches

84 Quick Thinking

Capcom would be a natural to run a dairy with the amount of milking practise it has got from milking the Street Fighter name. Find out why now



PREVIEWED
Wing Comm IV
Space action from EA 76

SOLUTION **Twisted Metal 2**

Dan Whitehead shows you how to win 86



Solutions 86

86 How To Win At Twisted Metal 2

Dan's played it to the death, so he thought it only fair to share with you how it's possible to win the greatest two player road rage shoot 'em-up in the history of the world

Regulars 6

6 News

Everything that's big in the American PlayStation arena is covered here, as well as an all-important update on the Mortal Kombat saga, the latest development news on Tomb Raider 2 and the never-ending freezing cold stream of ice hockey simulations. Read it all and you'll also discover there's a spectacular new Kick Boxing game on its way, but no British Ninja Jajamaru. Shame. Oh well, at least you could win some Star Wars Trilogy books. May the Force be with you etc...

91 Subscriptions

The page you need to fill in and send back to us with a cheque enclosed if you know what's good for you, and PlayStation gaming as a whole

94 Letters

If you need to know anything about the wonderful world of the PlayStation or you just fancy a chat without having to pay for a phone call, an e-mail account or a stamp, this is the place to write to and, indeed, read

96 Pro Recommends

Jay got fed up with his favourite games not being top of each genre and took it upon himself to re-do this section. It's best to humour him or he sulks

Competitions 62

58 Win a £400 snowboard as mentioned on the cover. It has the Sony PlayStation livery, looks large and the bits you stick your boots in are also supplied, even though they didn't get photographed

90 Win £3000 worth of eerily expensive exclusive air-brushed artwork (featuring the scary guy out of Legacy Of Kain used in all the adverts) courtesy of BMG



Contents

Reviews 12

12 Jonah Lomu Rugby PLAYSTATION

He's big, he's bold, he's unstoppable! Can't be Andy Sharp then... Jonah Lomu's injured in real life but he's a bit on the tough side in pixel form. Don't mess

16 The Lost Vikings 2 PLAYSTATION

Interplay's sequel to the SNES hit offers the perfect opportunity to highlight one of life's more traumatic problems – Nordic Warrior Misplacement

20 Speedster PLAYSTATION

Finally, Psygnosis has given in to consumer demand for a two-player split-screen race game. But is it any good or what?

24 Lifeforce: Tenka PLAYSTATION

You are a super-hard cyber-warrior of the future. You have a big gun. You have funny voices inside your head. Do you really want to be like Dan Whitehead?



28 Total NBA '97 PLAYSTATION

Be warned, this review has a very high praise content. Can't be one of Steve's reviews then. But no, what's this? McNally in positive opinion shocker!

32 Allied General PLAYSTATION

Blow the Krauts to kingdom come without the aid of Dad's Army in the similar-looking sequel to Panzer General

34 Rage Racer PLAYSTATION

The Ridge Racer series goes from strength to strength in this, the fastest and greatest instalment of Namco's awesome race game

38 Atari Arcade's Greatest Hits

Time to walk down the road humming 'Don't You Want Me?' and stopping off at the arcade before going to the barber for a Phil Oakey flick. Alternatively, forget the '80s ever happened

42 Tetris Plus

The Game Boy's seminal title is now available, on import anyway, on the PlayStation. And it's actually not that bad. So Alex reckons anyway...

44 Rebel Assault 2

LucasArts urges you to feel the force once more as its second Star Wars licensed PC conversion joins in on the movie's 20th anniversary celebrations

48 Ten Pin Alley

To date, nobody has produced a stunning version of a bowling game. Judging by the lack of a 'Pro approved' stamp here, that statement still rings true

50 Little Big Adventure

Question: What do you get if you cross a three year old PC game with a PlayStation. Answer: Read the review, that's what it's there for

52 Porsche Challenge PLAYSTATION

Sony tries to tempt us with the thrill of driving a £35,000 German sports car without the hassle of smashing the window and hot-wiring it

56 Hexen

Sing hallelujah! It's another of those Doom rip-offs. We just can't get enough of these, so thank the Lord for this, the game that time forgot

60 Epidemic

You're not kidding. One more 3-D first person perspective shoot 'em-up to add to the list. They're spreading so fast, it's a... four syllables, sounds a bit like 'hypodermic'

REVIEWED

Jonah Lomu Rugby

"Play the winner!" yelled Andy 12



62 Exhumed

Yet another first person 3-D perspective shoot 'em-up, this time from BMG. Give it a chance, there's life (and death) outside Hell, the Star Wars universe and spaceships in general

66 Transport Tycoon PLAYSTATION

Shout thrice hurrah for the arrival of the least environmentally friendly game ever. Demolish forests! Build unnecessary roads! Bludgeon baby seals! Etc...

70 Battle Stations

Far be it from us to give away whether a game's any good or not as early as the contents pages, let's just say we've renamed it 'Arse Stations' and leave it at that, shall we?

EVERY
GAME RANKED AND
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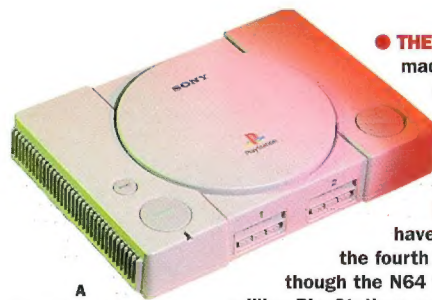
SKATEBOARDING, MOUNTAIN BIKING,
IN-LINE SKATING AND SNOWBOARDING



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news PlayStation Update



A PlayStation with a nice colour wash. Yesterday

● **THERE IS TO BE A MOVIE** made about Resident Evil. Alan McElroy (of Die Hard 4 and Spawn fame) is to write the screenplay.

● **OVER THREE MILLION PLAYSTATIONS**

have been sold in America. In the fourth quarter of last year, even though the N64 was launched, 1.46 million PlayStations and 6.36 million games were sold, totalling over \$650 million in sales during that period alone. Kaz Hirai, spokesman for Sony Computer Entertainment America, commented: "These sales figures make us the far-away leader in the next generation video game market".



Good old American football. It's the best

flag it. "I look forward to working with the Acclaim sports team to create the best football game ever" he commented.

● **INTERPLAY** is to release the following PlayStation games in the US this year - Star Trek: Starfleet Academy, Norse By Norsewest: The Return Of The Lost Vikings, Wild 9, Clay Fighter Extreme, VR Baseball '97, Red Asphalt, Caesar's



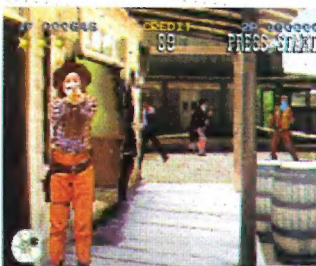
World Of Gambling and Hard War. The latter title, a non-linear epic set in a 3-D rendered futuristic city, will be published over here by Gremlin.

● **SONY** is set to release a new peripheral - an analogue joypad. The controller unit is a standard Sony joypad with two noticeable additions. Firstly, there are two analogue control pads, placed a thumb's reach from the d-pad and the four buttons. The two new pads can also be depressed to double as extra buttons. Secondly, there's a mechanism within the pad adding 'force feedback' to specially programmed games. When playing a driving game, for example, career into a wall and the control pad thumps with the impact - shades of the 'revolutionary' backpack accessory Aura Interactor.

At the time of writing, the jolt is nothing special - more of a tickle in fact - but Sony is confident that it'll pack a bit of a punch when it ships. No release date has been set as yet, but we'll keep you posted.

● **KONAMI** is to release Lethal Enforcers and Lethal Enforcers II on a single PlayStation CD. Arcade perfect, the first shoot 'em-up sees you taking to the urban streets of

They're enforcers. And they're lethal



a busy metropolis to hammer crime. The city has been overrun with crims and it's up to you to put a halt to this intolerable situation.

The second game on the disc hands you a wild west marshal's badge and a six-shooter to deal with outlaw scumbags. It's out in April in America, expect to see a British version shortly.



Looks not entirely unlike Street Racer

● **MEGAMAN BATTLE & CHASE**, from Capcom, is currently whetting the appetites of the Yanks. If you've read previous issues, you'll know that Megaman is wildly popular over there (in fact, Megaman 8 - just out - is the first Megaman to come in for any sort of criticism) but hasn't appeared on the UK PlayStation as yet, so don't get too upset if this particular title doesn't reach

British shores.

Looking like a cross between Motor Toon 2 and a next generation F-Zero (SNES), it's a 3-D, polygon based head-to-head racer with a horizontal split screen option for two-player challenges. The game's USP is that competitors can grab parts from each other's cars, thus changing the appearance and performance of their vehicle for the next race.



● **ELECTRONIC ARTS' Overblood** is a first for the company - it's a title acquired from Japan, translated into English specifically for the American market. It combines Resident Evil-style gameplay and environments with a real 3-D engine (rather than Resident Evil's pre-rendered backgrounds with superimposed

characters).

Originally developed by Riverhillsoft, a team only really known for an obscure 3DO title Dr Hauser, the game has its fair share of schlock horror with dead bodies, evil creatures and an incongruous Tweekey (of Buck Rogers in the 25th Century fame) style robot. With gameplay more on the puzzle solving side than action, this could be one that the more



mature PlayStation audience has been crying out for ever since the console was launched. A British release, it would seem, is dependant on success the other side of the Atlantic.

● **ANOTHER JAPANESE** translated game should be out in America by the time you read this. Wild Arms is Sony's second foray into the American RPG market. Combining classic RPG story telling with

anime-style artwork and character animation, the game also features pre-rendered polygon characters and backgrounds. We'll keep you updated if there's a sniff of a British release.

● **VANDAL HEARTS**, from Konami, is another RPG which has recently been released stateside. Unlike, say, Sulkoden, it's an isometric angle (which can be altered to your liking)

Wild Arms

Wild Arms is not to be confused with Wild Nines

strategy/RPG rather than a bird's eye view adventure-style RPG. Some of the special effects are stunning, particularly the character spells, and the music – from concertos to symphonies – has been well chosen to create in-game ambience. With an intelligent, interesting storyline, Vandal Hearts is an impressive looking piece of software. When news of a Pal conversion is confirmed, we'll be the first with the report.

Vandal Hearts – a stunning looking RPG. And no mistake



● **DESCENT II** (aka Descent Maximum in the US) has received mixed reviews over there. It seems that the sequel to an okay original hasn't done itself justice. The game engine has stayed the same and as a result it already looks a little dated. Due out over here soon, it could prove a title to avoid. Reviewed next month.

● **ON THE SUBJECT** of titles to avoid, Independence Day has also suffered some ropey review marks in America. To place it in its true context, some mags have given it less than the awful Crypt Killer! Apparently the gameplay is limited and flawed and can be best described as a poor man's Air Combat. Oh dear...

● **NAMCO MUSEUM** Vol 4 has hit American shelves,

coinciding with the release of Vol 3 over here. The best couple of titles on it are Assault and Pac-Land, with Ordine probably the only other game worthy of mention. Like the previous three Museums, it's unlikely anyone under 21 will be interested, but we'll still be bringing you the first full review so you can make up your own mind.



Descent II – to be reviewed in full next month



Above: The don't-be-surprised if-it's-rubbish Independence Day, from Fox Interactive

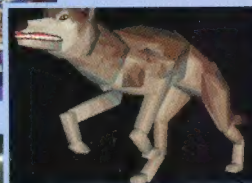
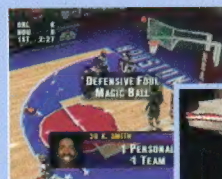
Below: Pac Man adventuring around in his very own Pac-Land



American Top Ten




- 1 NBA Live '97
- 2 NFL Gameday '97
- 3 Tomb Raider
- 4 Twisted Metal 2
- 5 Madden '97
- 6 Tekken 2
- 7 Crash Bandicoot
- 8 Soviet Strike



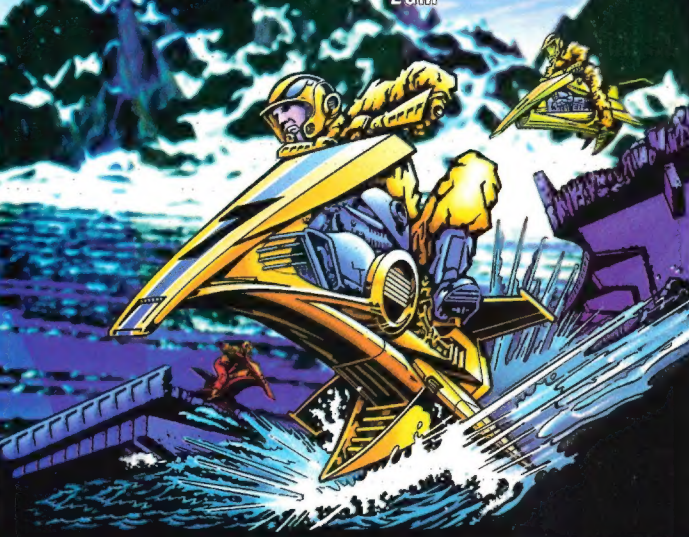
- 9 Mortal Kombat Trilogy
- 10 Jet Moto







"SURE TO GET THE ADRENALINE PUMPING"

EGM





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Total Drivin' Update

Gateshead based Eutechnics, formerly known as Merit Studios (Europe) Ltd, is now hoping for a May release date for Total Drivin'. To be published by Ocean, Total Drivin' now not only features a split screen option but also a four-player link-up game using the PlayStation serial link cable.

Coded by Andrew Perella and Andrew Richards (the programmer of the number one best seller Pete Sampras Tennis), Total Drivin' has been in development for around 18 months, with a dedicated team of over 20 artists, programmers and designers working to produce the ultimate arcade-style racer. Total Drivin' utilises a dynamic 3-D world engine to create a realistic game environment where the vehicles obey the correct laws of motion (whatever they are), the result being an incredibly realistic driving experience.

Rather than stick rigidly to the simulation side of things, Total Drivin' includes a load of daft arcade extras such as erupting volcanoes (which you can plummet into if your driving is particularly bad), collapsing bridges and precipitous ravines. A variety of terrain is featured, from the beach, through the streets of Moscow to Alpine locations with the likes of the desert and Hong Kong in between.



Not only is there a diversity in road surface and location, there are a total of 24 different cars to choose from, each modelled on real-life vehicles from sports class, buggies and rally class. Already previewed in issue three, expect a full review next issue.

Split screen action ahoi! Faster than a speeding bullet

Tomb Raider 2 Update

Core Design isn't divulging much information at the moment, but we've managed to pick up a few more snippets. Lara's foe this time around is a mysterious cult she has to face in such locations as Venice and The Great Wall of China. A further level sees her negotiating the rooms of a sunken, upside down liner.

Tomb Raider 2 uses the same game engine as the original, although Lara has more moves and weapons at her disposal on this outing. She can now climb ropes and chains, scale walls, crawl through tight spaces and kill underwater enemies with a harpoon gun. Lara is to wear a different costume on each level to sate the appetites of Laraphiles all over the world who have so far only seen her in her tight shorts and vest ensemble.



Discworld 2

Subtitled Mortality Bites, Discworld II combines even more point and click cartoon chaos than its critically acclaimed original incarnation. There are more mind boggling puzzles, more epic quests and more slapstick humour, courtesy of ex Monty Python team member Eric Idle.

This time around, there are over 25,000 frames of motion picture quality animation. Joining Idle in the voice actor stakes is Nigel Planer, best known for his role as Neil in The Young Ones. Rincewind, the inept wizard and hero of the game, is chartered with bringing Death back to grips with his job. In a freak accident, however, Death is blown to an exotic location where he decides that lounging about on the beach with a glass of cold beer in his hand is much more fun than his other ghastly duties. Rincewind must now convince Death of the merits of morality. It's already available on PC and we'll preview Discworld II next month.



Do We Need Another Ice Hockey Game?

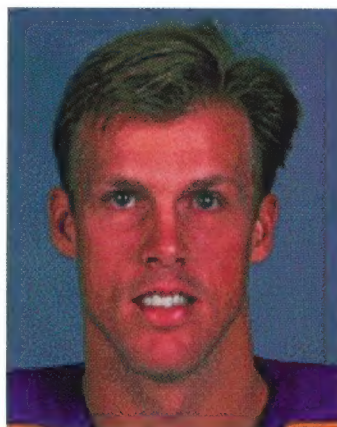
As far as GT and Virgin are concerned, yes. Both coming in just too late for review this ish, the former title is NHL Open Ice, licenced by the NHL and NHL Players' Association. It's a two-on-two ice hockey challenge (unusual) which features over 100 players from all 26 NHL teams, tons of power-up codes and special hidden characters.

Like the NBA Jam series, there's an 'On-fire' mode (surely this would melt the ice?), a DCS Sound System, simulation scoreboard and special modes such as 'Big Head' and 'Super-Goalie'. Commentary is from the 'legendary' Pat Foley, with most of his in-game comments coming direct from the arcade version. Famous lines such as, 'He got a glove on it!', 'A rocket!', 'He shoots... he scores!' are accompanied by some new ones, including the ESPN classic 'He puts the biscuit in the basket', and a ridiculous new one, 'So many hat tricks he needs a hat rack!'.

Gameplay promises to be identical to the arcade version, whether it is or not you'll find out in next month's PlayStation Pro.

Virgin's Powerplay Hockey '97 is an update on last year's effort, with all-new stats, team kits and a few enhancements that should excite ice hockey

enthusiasts if no-one else. Again, this title will be reviewed next month - look for it as it goes head-to-head for the pucking title with NHL Open Ice.



Left: An Ice Hockey player. Yesterday. Identify him and win a pound

Actua Soccer 2

Not the 'updated' version of Actua Soccer which is featured in this month's preview section, Actua Soccer 2 is a brand new game to be released this autumn. Boasting a completely new game engine and almost completely different programming team, Actua Soccer 2 is going where no footy game has gone before.

Phil Rankin, the only remaining member of the original Actua Soccer team, did such a good job of converting the PC code to PlayStation he has been made lead programmer. His input has so far included creating simulations of all the Premier League grounds as well as the McAlpine Stadium at Huddersfield and the less enchanting environs of Wigan's ramshackle Springfield Park.

Only a few Premier League grounds have been completed at the time of writing, but any fan with a knowledge of English footy will instantly recognise them. Aston Villa's enormous new Holte End and Arsenal's Clock End already grace the game.



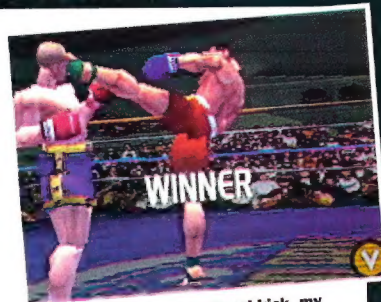
Kickboxing Chaos!

The first kickboxing game to emerge since the old Best Of Best Championship Karate for the SNES is on its way to the PlayStation, thanks to THQ. K1 The Arena Fighters aims to be a realistic simulation pitting two opponents head-to-head in the square-circle, where the options are there for them to kick and punch each other until one of them starts kissing the canvas.

The action is said to resemble a real kickboxing fight, with eight selectable combatants on offer, all based and motion captured from real-life masters of the art. As you'd expect, the whole set-up and control configuration is identical to the current crop of fighting games, including a powerbar, flash knock downs, special moves and four different modes of play.



The action takes place in a standard boxing ring, plus there are a variety of outdoor arenas, including a canyon setting and mountain range backdrop. The characters look incredibly realistic, and upon completion of the game you'll get a behind the scenes FMV film showing you how the creators created the texture mapped, motion captured fighters. It's all sounding very cool at present, but a UK release date has yet to be set.



Good kick, my son. Now punch him in the goolies

Core Holds Back Ninja

Creators of the wonderful Tomb Raider, Core Design, has delayed the release of its forthcoming adventure yarn, Ninja, until next year.



According to the Derby based developers, its line up for the rest of the year contains too many quality titles and therefore is going to spend more time on Ninja in order to make it the smash hit of 1998.

Hopefully, we'll get to have a look at it some time before then, and of course we'll fill you in on all the fine details when we know more.

Mortal Kombat Returns



It's official! Well, sort of. A new Mortal Kombat game is on the way! Referred to as The MK RPG by certain industry rumour monkeys, the game's full title is Mortal Kombat Mythologies: The Adventures of Sub-Zero, but this isn't set in stone. Not much information has been released about the title, but we believe that Sub Zero is going to be the game's main character and the storyline takes place prior to the original MK1 Tournament. About 10 years before, in fact.

Apparently, the reason why John Tobias - Mortal Kombat's character designer - isn't on the Team for MK4 is because he's busy working on this baby. The title is alleged to finally break the MK mould and become a sort of Mortal Kombat meets Resident Evil, but this hadn't been confirmed. What is fairly certain though, is that it's being developed initially for the PlayStation with possibly a multi-platform release later on. If all goes to plan, expect its release shortly after the summer.

TWISTED METAL WORLD TOUR

"GET TWISTED METAL WORLD TOUR AND GET IT SOON"

Play Magazine

"THE BEST 2 PLAYER ACTION GAME OF ALL TIME"

Game Informer

SONY

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Stop Press

■ Namco, Sony Computer Entertainment and Polygon Pictures have combined to form a new company. The firm, named Dream Pictures Studio, is to be launched this month and will collectively develop software as well as a series of eye popping computer rendered movies in the vein of Disney's Toy Story, making it the world's most advanced digital entertainment outfit around.

■ Ninja Jajamaru, Jaleco's weird Japanese beat 'em-up, won't be officially released over here. The reason? It's far too weird for the British market.

■ Apparently harbouring the same uncharitable feelings about the previous Jurassic Park games that



most of us do, DreamWorks has set its new The Lost World: Jurassic Park 2 adventure game over five 'acts'. Players will be placed in the shoes of five different

characters, ranging from dino to human, predator to prey - including acting out the part of a chaotic T-Rex! Screenshots are a closely guarded secret at present (much like the movie itself) but it is rumoured the game will in the shops by the time the film hits the silver screen. A small piece of Hollywood gossip while we're on the subject - plans are allegedly underway for the third Jurassic Park movie.

■ Evil Dead star, Bruce Campbell, has apparently been pencilled in to take the lead role in the forthcoming 'much rumoured nothing confirmed' movie based on id's gore fest, Doom.

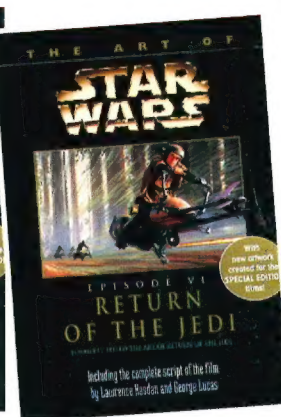
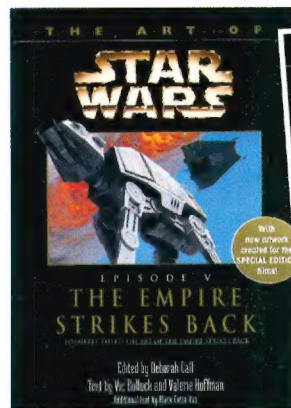
■ According to industry whispers, the forthcoming and much awaited Virtua Fighter 3 is to be converted to the PlayStation later this year. More news on this when we get it.

■ Changeover is likely to sign an exclusive deal with Sony for the right to hire out PlayStation games, leaving Blockbuster and co gutted. Publishing outfit, the Columbus Group, will market the initiative.

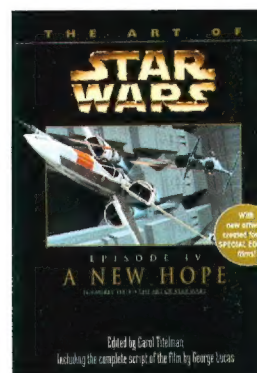
■ GT is set to bring out a range of Star Trek titles. The first release will be a game based on Deep Space Nine. Stay with PlayStation Pro for monthly updates.



Star Wars ART ATTACK



A long time ago, in a bookshop far far away the excellent Art Of Star Wars trilogy hit the book stores. Now, due to the re-release of the films, Titan Books has reissued these beautiful works of art in all-new covers. Each one showcases all the character designs, complete scripts, preliminary sketches, plus loads of stop motion animation models and matte paintings which were used for backdrops in the trilogy. Especially included for these reissues is a new section detailing all the additions to the aforementioned re-released 'Special Edition' movies, showing all-new scenes and a handful of new computer animated beasts from the Star Wars universe too. Hardcore fans of the Jedi phenomenon simply can't afford to miss out on these collectable books, and okay, the entire trilogy will set you back the best part of £60, but believe me they're more than worth it. Look out for our compo next issue!



COMPETITION WINNERS FROM ISSUES 2 & 3

GRANT MATTHEWS, DERBY
GLENN HARRINGTON, ROCHESTER
ROBERT BRIGHT JR, DARTFORD
J HORSELL, SWINDON
MARTIN HARKIN JR, LONDONDERRY
NIGEL ALDCROFT, ST HELENS
SIMON GARDINER, STOCKPORT
P MYERS, CRAWLEY
JOHN MIDGLEY, TORQUAY
STEPHEN DINKELDEIN, LONDON
PAUL BANYARD, LONDON
ADRIAN GRAY, RUISLIP
PAUL DICKINSON, HULL
MARTIN BARLOW, BOLTON
PAUL MURNAGHAN, STOCKPORT
GEORGE MASON, WEELEY
JAMIE THOMAS, RHONDDA
MARTIN LEWIS (THE NEWSREADER?), FAREHAM
RICHARD WYATT, MANCHESTER
BARRY KYSON, SWINDON
ADAM LOVATT, STOKE

Correction

Last month's news piece entitled 'Sony Renew Namco Partnership' stated that Yasuhiko Asada was executive marketing director of Namco Ltd. He is actually executive marketing director of Namco's Consumer Division. Sorry.

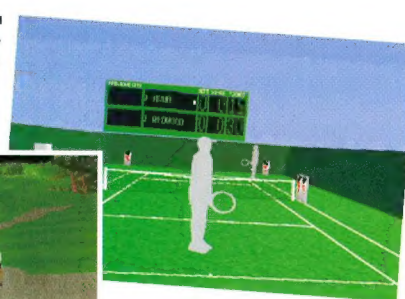
More Actua Sports

Actua Golf 2 and Actua Tennis are currently in development at Gremlin's Sheffield in-house studio. Actua Golf 2 is incredibly similar to the original version except with six different courses to play on. Actually, that's not entirely true. New graphical effects such as water reflections and better defined texture mapped landscapes have been added and the control system has been refined to enhance playability.

Of the six courses, three are real - Oxford, Kiawah Island and Carnoustie and three are fantasy, made up of some of the best holes from real life courses around the world. Peter Alliss makes a 'welcome' return, roped in/paid loads to do the interactive commentary and he weighs in with a fantasy course of his own selection (included within the aforementioned three). This time, he's joined by Alex Hay - presumably well known in the golf world - in the commentary box. Gremlin is touting a May release, so if it does stay on schedule we'll have a review for you next ish.

Actua Tennis, as you can see by the screenshot, is still quite early in development, although when PlayStation Pro paid a visit to Gremlin last month the characters were already more realistic looking than they appear here. You'll see a full preview next month, or at least some more up to date screenshots as and when Gremlin release them to us.

Tennis - a crap game for toffs (Alex Lee)



Golf - a good walk spoilt (Mark Twain)

PORSCHE

challenge™

"9/10"

PlayStation Power

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Jonah Lomu Rugby

He's big, he's bold, he's unstoppable, he's out for quite some time! Jonah Lomu may be off the field for a while but he's here in spirit in this fine rugby release from Codemasters



As the game loads there are the team line ups and an 'interesting' rugby fact for you to read



Be sure to pick a good team as they're all true to life. Canada will doubtless be absolutely stuffed by the Aussies...



...You see! Canada are being shown exactly what it's all about by a far superior team. It's safe to assume this will be a successful kick

Who'd have thought there would ever be such a thing as a truly playable and enjoyable game of rugby? Then all of a sudden Jonah Lomu slams into you at full speed to knock you off your feet.

The PlayStation has had practically every sport covered from around the globe except Sumo wrestling (probably), so it was a refreshing sight when Jonah Lomu Rugby (JLR) arrived. What was even more refreshing was that it played well and wasn't too complicated.

Newcomers to the sport of rugby union (not league mind you, that's a different kettle of fish altogether, although they're both played by big men who drink rather a lot) should be able to pick up the basics surprisingly quickly.

You have a team of 15 players and the basics are – you must plonk the ball down behind the other team's goal line to gain five points. To top this up you can kick the ball between the goal posts for a two point conversion anywhere along the line of the try. The only other ways to score are a drop goal or a penalty kick.

This may or may not be common knowledge and although there are plenty of people around

who don't know the first thing about rugby (myself included), you can still enjoy a few games of Jonah Lomu Rugby. The main reason for this is it's well presented and simple to get the hang of.

As with any game it does take a couple of plays to adapt to the control system but once you've mastered it, it's guaranteed to offer plenty of enjoyment, even for people who have no interest in rugby. So don't just dismiss it, it deserves better.

Developed by Rage Software, responsible for the PlayStation's first class footy game Striker 96, JLR bears a passing resemblance to it. The players look similar and the player you control has an identifying circle much like the old footy game.

The stadiums are similar looking, with four different locations to play but this is where the similarities end. Lomu is in a class of its own mainly due to the fact that nobody has been bold enough to attempt anything like this before for the PlayStation.

There are numerous modes of play including a two-on-two team effort where a multi tap will be

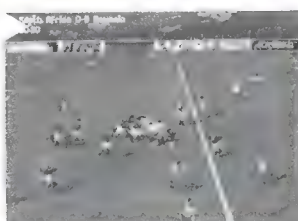


Halley's Comet is seen more frequently than this deadlocked scoreline



Line outs can be a good chance of regaining possession so it's good to know when to time your jump

The weather can change during a match to add a little more realism into the contest



A replay occurs immediately after a point and can be rewound even further if you fancy seeing the entire build up

The South Africans pile in to put the pressure on Western Samoa who will no doubt crumble



required. Here you take charge of two team mates and do your utmost to run rings around the opposition. Other game options are a one player game, two player and a two player team game.

There are friendly matches, a plethora of tournaments ranging from the Five Nations to the Tri Nations – which to be honest isn't up to much, a mere two games and the tournament is over. There's also a territories cup and, to top it all off, you can play your very own classic match, just to prove that everything's been thoroughly researched.

Once a playing mode has been chosen the game takes a little time to load. Rather than give you a loading screen the teams are shown in their entirety and there's a section of text which tells you some history about the team (usually the performance of the team in the 1995 World Cup), complete with scores and the progress made. The only problem with this is that if you've read it once, you've read it hundreds of times.

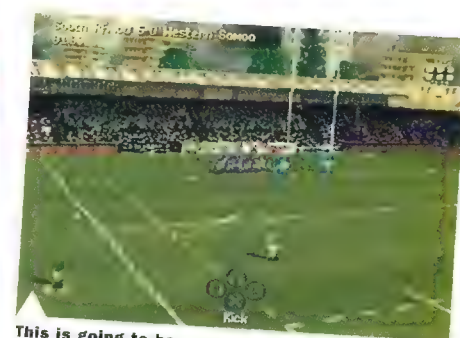
To play the game itself you will need to have some finely tuned reactions as the action can

come thick and fast. It holds all of the highs and lows of the sport, including seemingly endless kicks into touch while a team progresses slowly but steadily up the field as well as quick breaks from one end of the field to the other.

The controls can be a little perplexing to begin with as you get used to all of the different moves. Passing the ball consists of using any of the shoulder buttons. With these you can pass from left to right using the corresponding button. The second buttons bypass one player to get the ball wide far quicker and although this is far less successful, it can gain you some valuable ground.

Kicks are taken using the X button but if you fancy trying your luck at a drop goal you must use the circle button. How hard you kick the ball depends on how long you hold the button down and an arrow shows you the strength and direction the kick will go. You can change the direction as you go. Unfortunately you don't always have the time and space to execute the perfect kick.

One noticeable change in this final version, compared the preview version, is in the ►



This is going to be a powerful kick as you can see from the length of the arrow. Take the wind factor into account also and you're away



A kick has just been retrieved. It's time to begin an attack. How will you go about getting up the field to score?



The D-pad at the bottom of the screen is a quick reminder of what button to use for your particular strategy

Rugby is one of the few sports in which the English can trounce the Italians



The replays are shown in a far lower angle but still show it in great detail



Jonah Lomu Rugby

► defending. Earlier versions had an automatic player change which chose the player closest to the attacking player. This must now be done manually so there's no one to blame but yourself for a defensive error. Unfortunately it brings a new argument to the fore as you quickly attempt the toggle to the desired player. Successfully simulating the defence was always going to be tricky and it's actually been done as well as it could be.

Defending is done in much the same way as passing the ball. The shoulder buttons provide you with the option to toggle between the defenders and prevent too much progress from the opposition. Tackling is something you will have to get used to – there

is a holding tackle and a full blown diving tackle. A diving tackle is handy for occasionally forcing the attacker to spill the ball and if you're quick/lucky you can retrieve the loose ball.

Once a ball is recovered or a player tackled, a ruck will ensue. Not in the brawling sense but the players will leap into a mini scrum and battle it out for the ball which has to be released after a player is grounded. How many players you throw into this ruck is up to you entirely and you may opt to bring them out at any time.

Thankfully there are little reminders as to which buttons you need to press at the bottom of the screen if you become flustered in the heat of the contest.

This is the case for most factors of the game and although they're



Each of the grounds contained within Jonah Lomu are as accurate as they come



The All Blacks are far and away the best team. Guess who Jonah Lomu plays for?



The Australians begin an attack. How can they be stopped? Sheer brute force is the answer



The classic matches are recreated and begin very late in the proceedings. Can you change the outcome?

invaluable for the first few games, you'll find yourself looking for help less and less.

The range of teams included are global and range from the mighty All Blacks to the rather terrible Chinese Taipei and, as you'd expect, each team lives up to their real life counterparts. The players are also real players and have individual strengths and weaknesses. Some are excellent runners, others can kick the ball huge distances and some are far better staying back and putting attacking players into the advertising hordes. However, anybody who plays this is certain to stick with one of the big teams as there are so many who just aren't up to world class standard.

For all its complications, Lomu has shown that rugby can be as addictive a sports game as the Actuas, FIFAs and NFLs of this world and it's not of paramount importance to clearly understand the rules of the sport. These will be picked up the more you play and soon you will have made your own strategies which you can work on until you have them well and truly sorted for your chosen team.

If there is a fault with Lomu Rugby it has to be the wind option which can be a real pain when kicking for vital points. Although the wind direction is shown, it rarely blows that way and seems to blow in the same direction all the time. This means that once you've sussed the kicking you will tend to ignore the direction shown and successfully kick for some points.

To top it all off there is some commentary included from the likes of big Bill Beaumont and Bill McLaren along with weather changes throughout to add that feeling of realism into the contest.

Although Jonah Lomu himself is on the sidelines right now he is included in the All Blacks squad here. It's a shame that his name is needed to promote the game as this is one of the best sports simulations of all time and should do the business regardless. Maybe he's there to frighten people into the purchase.

Jonah takes on whales shocker!

He came from nowhere to become the youngest player to ever play for the New Zealand All Blacks. This was only a few short years ago against the French. Since then he's had a massive impact on the world rugby scene with his performances in the 1995 World Cup being truly outstanding. At six foot four and weighing in at nineteen stone it's fair to say that he'll be around for many years to come, assuming he's not injured. He's sidelined at the moment with a kidney disorder. His medication would enhance his performance even more and it's fair to say that nobody would want to be on the field facing that prospect. It doesn't bear thinking about!



Penalties can turn a game away from your grasp so be very wary a player doesn't stroll offside



As you play more you will learn a whole host of tricks to help your attack and also the best ways to defend against far superior opposition

You can choose to take part as any team in the 1995 World Cup. The group matches are the same. The outcome however can be changed

PRO SCORE

GAME Jonah Lomu Rugby

GENRE Sports sim

SOFTWARE HOUSE Codemasters

CONTACT 01926 814132

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED

Rugby is a sport I've always disliked. It's one of the most boring sports to watch, surpassed only by Crown Green Bowling and playing it just hasn't appealed to me. However much I detest rugby though, there's no disputing the fact that Codemasters is bringing one of the best simulations you're ever likely to see onto the PlayStation. It plays well, looks very realistic and has more options than you could think of. It's all in here. From the scrums, the lineouts to penalty kicks it all begins to work its way into the nervous system. The more I played, the more I enjoyed it and you never know, maybe one day I will be able to sit through 80 minutes of a real match.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9



DAN Seeing as this finds its way onto one of the office PlayStations the minute your back's turned, it must be fairly smart. Unfortunately, I loathe rugby so I've hardly touched the bloody thing

JAY Not my 'bag' this, but I'm led to believe it's the best sporting way to waste your time since Namco's Smash Court Tennis, and it's obviously very playable, judging by the crowds who queue up to play it in the office

ALEX Buy this now. It's the best sports game on the PlayStation. On a par with Namco's Smash Court Tennis, marginally better than Track n Field and streets ahead of any footy game I've seen. Bought it yet?

STEVE Not sure whether it's quite as good as Smash Tennis but I am sure that it's bloody fantastic! Don't be a narrow minded footy fan, broaden your sporting horizons with one of the most playable games ever!



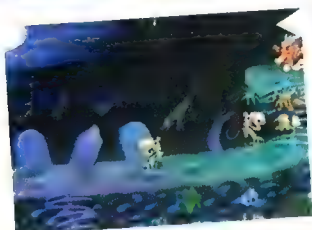
The Lost Vikings 2:

Norse by Norse West

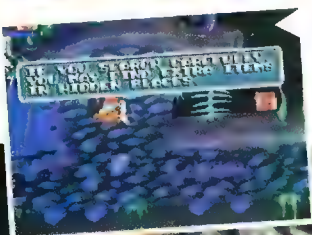
Interplay's sequel to the SNES hit offers the perfect opportunity to highlight one of life's more traumatic problems: Nordic Warrior Misplacement



One of Olaf's best tricks is breaking through floors with his arse



Those skeletons will damage the Vikings, unless Baleog can kill 'em



Handy hints pop up at suitable intervals, to help out

It's so easy to lose Vikings. Ask anyone. I got some Vikings for Christmas, a nice set to compliment my already bulging collection. One of them even had a shiny copper hand. I'd only had them for five minutes when the Queen's speech came on the telly. Naturally, being a loyal subject of the crown, I raced to the living room leaving my Vikings to amuse themselves in the kitchen. 15 minutes later, full of hope for the future of the Commonwealth, I returned to the kitchen only to find my Vikings had vanished. No sign of them. After rummaging under the cooker for half an hour I admitted defeat and retreated to my bedroom for a quick sob.

Fast forward a few hours and, during Christmas dinner, I'm tucking into some steaming pudding when what should I break a tooth on? Exactly. My Vikings had fallen into the pudding mixture, like silly Nordic sixpences. And I reckon this sort of thing happens all too frequently. I even did a brief poll on the street to test my theory, and over 27 people nervously admitted to having

similar problems with Viking loss before the police asked me to move along.

Had I bothered to hitch down to Buckinghamshire to ask Interplay about its Viking misplacements, I would have got a more concrete story. You see, its latest game is called *Lost Vikings 2*. And more than that, it's the sequel to a SNES game that Interplay did have, but dropped behind the sofa and couldn't find again. So it's *Lost Vikings 2*, the sequel to a lost original. And that's some crazy cosmic coincidence, man.

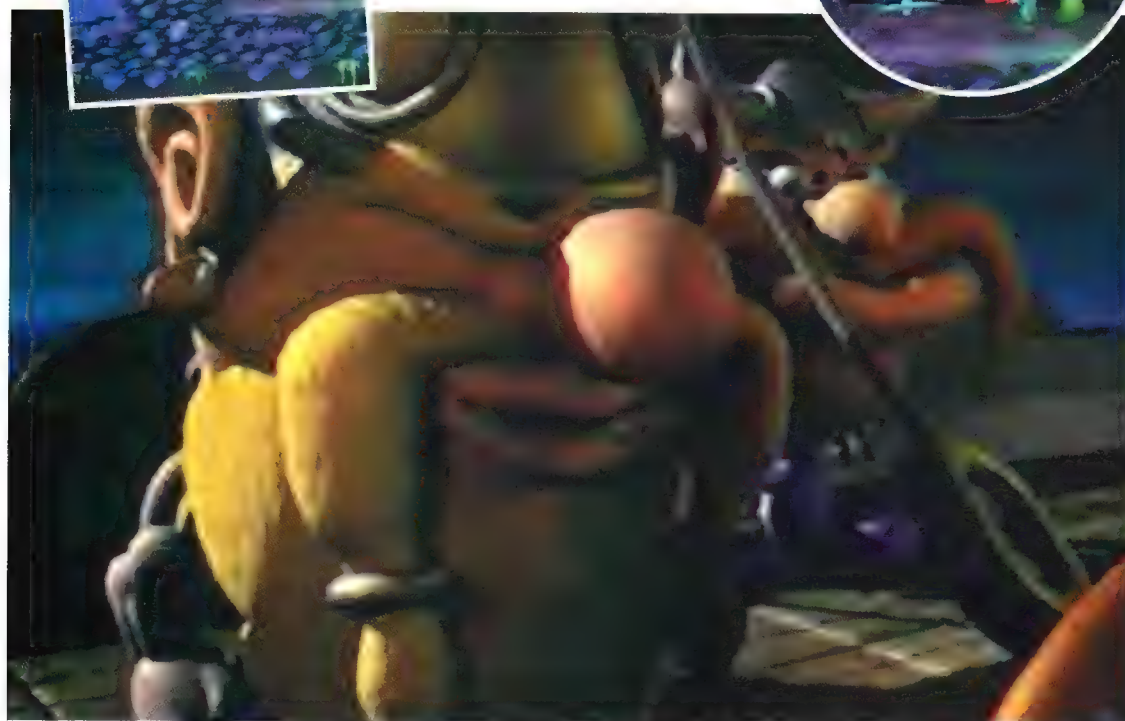
Now, I was more than aware of this game's 16bit origins, and was understandably rather wary of touching it in case I caught some sort of old fashioned skin-fungus.



What with that and the fact that the word 'puzzle' has been mentioned, I was already sweating like a comedy vicar at the prospect. Then I plucked up some courage, downed a bottle of cheap gin and played my first game. But you'll have to wait a while to find out how I fared, because here comes one of those page filling story bits.

In the first game we met three Vikings, Olaf, Eric and Baleog. While out on a fishing trip, or some similar Viking pursuit, the hairy trio were, somewhat implausibly, kidnapped by an evil alien called Tomator. Needless to say, they escaped.

We rejoin them three years later, as they embark on a fishing trip. And guess what? Tomator, now rather obsessed with the horny-helmeted gang, beams them up again. But things go awry and the Vikings escape into time and space, clutching some hi-tech gadgets swiped from the spaceship. Can they find their way home? Can they stay together long enough to survive? Will they end up using this story for the third game in





Deep in the jungle, and a fair way into the game, you'll need all the Viking's skills to survive

the series? Hopefully, perhaps and probably.

So our rotund heroes are cast adrift into mysterious worlds and have to find their way back home. Luckily, not only are they armed with magical and technological gizmos, they also have trustworthy faces allowing them to attract help from various other characters. For instance, the first person you'll meet is a witch. She'll help teleport you closer to your goal, if you can find the right ingredients for the spell.

And so, for a few levels at least, you keep finding these ingredients to be shunted a little closer to home. To achieve these aims, you've got direct control over the three Vikings. Each has their own particular tricks and specialities and the puzzle element comes in figuring out how to use the trio together to solve various problems blocking their path.

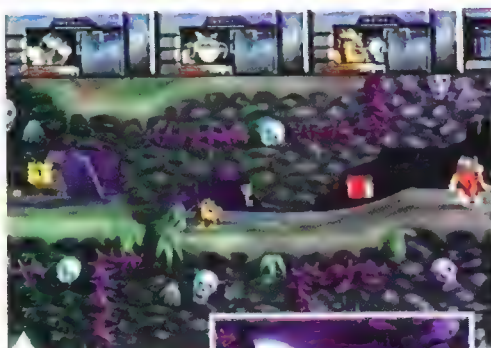
With at least four or five talents to each character (each of which has multiple uses), there's always a way through even the most impassable puzzle. Most of the puzzles require you to split the team up and reunite them at the end of the level, so you'll know if one of them is still stuck when you reach the end, you've gone wrong somewhere. At certain points, the teleport goes haywire resulting in one of the Vikings going missing. At times like this, you'll come across one of two auxiliary characters. There's a werewolf and a dragon who will sign up temporarily to make up the three and they're also the inspiration for a series of truly terrible running jokes.

Now, the bit you've all been waiting for, the 'Is it any good?' bit. And yes, it's very good. Much to my surprise, it's actually bordering on the fantastic. The graphics aren't huge, but they look great and are superbly animated with loads of attention to detail. The Vikings and friends all chatter away to each other in crisp sampled speech, which manages the non-too-easy task of actually being funny, and the presentation as a whole is spot on.

It's in the gameplay stakes however, where Lost Vikings find its trump card, as the learning curve is pitched just right. Throughout the game, particularly at the start, you'll find little pop-up hints and instructions which teach you how to use each of the Vikings' powers to best effect, so within a few levels you'll be an expert at getting the most from your Nordic wonderboys.

It's usually at this point in a review such as this (puzzle game, cartoon graphics, crap in-game gags) that I'd be tempted to say 'kids will love it', simply because that's what you always put in reviews like this. But that always makes

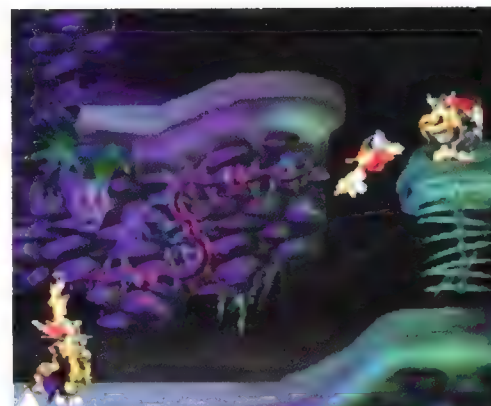
Olaf's shield will hold off the skeletons attacks, but you'll need Baleog's bionic arm to kill them



Olaf has used his magic shield to shrink himself. He can now reach that essential key



Here's that bionic arm in action. Baleog can also use it to swing like Tarzan and grab distant objects



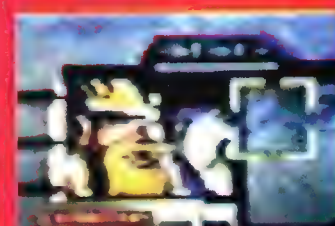
While Olaf repels a torrent of flame with his shield, Erik is using his jet boots to leap up to that platform

Baleog The Fierce



The team's fighter, he carries an energy cube which can kill enemies. He's also got a discus with which can punch enemies, grab objects out of reach and sleep jewels in the cooling allowing him to swing the Teller like that. He can't jump.

Olaf The Stout



This pudgy fellow carries a shield which can block fire. It can repel attacks, other characters can stand on it when it's raised above his head and he can use it to glide when falling. By pressing down it also has the power to stretch Olaf in fit through small spaces. The food from the kitchen is a delicious gift to break through unstable floors and in most cases slightly into the air. The biggest problem is he is unable to jump.

Erik The Swift



Wearing jet-boots, Erik speeds along on your large adventures. He can also run at high speed, breaking through walls and head-buttling enemies and at the way. He's the only character capable of swimming, thanks to his wings behind him. Other characters will drown on contact with water.

Lost Vikings 2: Norse by Norse West

► the game in question sound like some sort of feeble Fisher Price effort where the greatest challenge is putting the pegs in the right hole. Lost Vikings 2 is much more involved than that.

The puzzles and problems are testing enough to keep me stroking my chin and I'm a grown up with an education and all that. It's never so difficult you're discouraged, but you won't be breezing through the 30 or so levels in a weekend (unless you're a lateral thinking genius). You can retry each level as often as is necessary, so trial and error is no great hassle and a mercifully brief password is offered at the end of each level.

In fact, the game does everything possible to

GENRE COMPARISON

Game 3D Lemmings

Software House Psygnosis

There's nothing quite like Lost Vikings 2 on the PlayStation, but this early offering comes closest. Luckily for us, Vikings ignores flashy 3-D graphics and concentrates instead on solid gameplay and simple addictiveness. Puzzle fans should get hold of this immediately.

make life easy for you, apart from showing you what to do. It's genuinely funny, although some of the jokes are almost as feeble and obvious as mine, and with five wildly different characters to master it's a game that exudes personality.

Steve, a fan of the original from the SNES days, has

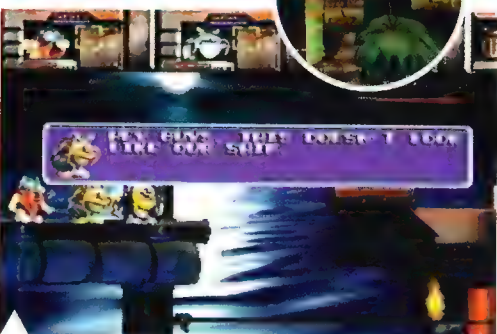
even reached the stage of treating these animated sprites as close personal friends. But then he's always been a source of worry like that.

If it's starting to sound like I'm waffling, it's because I'm having trouble thinking of anything bad to say about it, to be honest. It doesn't strive to be anything amazingly innovative, but certainly exhausts all the possibilities of the genre. The only downside that I can think of is that it's hardly a massive progression from its 16bit origins, but as it's likely to retail for around £35 you can't really complain. Apart from that trifling quibble this achieves everything it sets out to do – amuses, entertains and tickles the grey matter in a near perfect way. Highly recommended.

Very nearly at the end of their ordeal, the Nordic nibblers end up in Hell, of all places



Another bionic arm use is discovered! Baleog can now shimmy along ropes



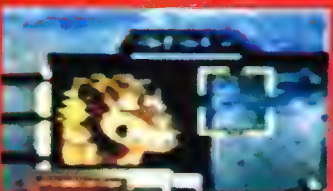
Just when they thought the end was in sight. It may be a ship, but this is full of pirates, not vikings

Scorch The Dragon



The other token member of the gang, this scary chap is quite sweet underneath his fearsome exterior. He can jump and swoop in the air, repeated jumps will enable him to flap his wings and fly. He can only flap so many times though before he gets tired. And, as a dragon, he can breathe fireballs, which is handy.

Fang The Werewolf



One of the poo-ficking characters who'll join your gang to replace any stray members. True to his vulpine status, he's a good jumper. He can also slash out with his claws to zap off any baddies. Jump onto a wall and he'll cling to it and slowly slide down. Jump again and he can climb the wall by jumping and grabbing with his claws.

PRO SCORE

GAME Lost Vikings 2: Norse by Norse West

GENRE Puzzle

SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay

CONTACT 01628 423666

RELEASE DATE April

PRICE £35.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED

Proof positive that a great game is a great game, regardless of the machine it's running on. It's essentially a remake of the original, but with special PlayStation shininess. You can't go wrong if you're looking for a challenging and amusing puzzle experience. It's one of those games that makes up for all the dross we see month in month out, as its addictive gameplay comes as a complete surprise. Steve seemed convinced that this was going to be the bestest game ever, and I felt rather scared to say otherwise. Thankfully, one play is enough to prove Steve right. It's great. Good natured, hair-tearing, time-consuming fun and what could be more appealing than that?

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 8

8½

STEVE I'd have been tempted to give this half a mark more than Dan's stingily awarded it for at least a couple of reasons. The characterisation is brilliant and the puzzles supremely well thought out

JAY The SNES version was excellent and this sequel of sorts continues the same level of addictiveness, amusement and all round playability. And as it's only 35 quid, you can't really go wrong. A beauty

ALEX Don't let the 'non-next generation' looks deceive you. Like the excellent Worms, Lost Vikings 2 looks ordinary but is virtually unputdownable. As a single player challenge I'd put it on a par with Tomb Raider

ANDY It's a shame I was absent on the day these comments were written. I had gone to see Star Wars, you see. Which means the rest of the team get to take the mickey out of my hair and peculiar musical taste



**"WE COULD GIVE IT UP
TOMORROW,
NO PROBLEM."**

**"MIND YOU,
WE SAID THAT
YESTERDAY."**



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BREAKNECK RACING FOR 1 TO 8 ADDICTS



Codemasters
pure gameplay

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Speedster

Finally, Psygnosis has given in to consumer demand for a two-player split screen race game. But is it any good or what?



Having proved itself as one of the leading PlayStation development houses in the world with hits such as WipeOut 2097, Formula 1 and Destruction Derby 2, Psygnosis is set to continue its tradition of giving PlayStation owners some of the best racing games for the console.

However, Speedster differs from the aforementioned trio in two important ways. Firstly, it's a top-down (or bird's eye view) racing game and secondly, it's the first Psygnosis title to feature a split screen option for two-player racing. Only two other software houses have so far brought out simultaneous two-player split-screen racers – Electronic Arts with Need For Speed and Ubisoft with Street Racer.

In Speedster, however, the screen is split vertically rather than horizontally with the view angle being various elevations of the bird's eye view, not a 'behind the car' effort like all the other racing games so far available on the PlayStation.

Three levels of difficulty are offered – novice, intermediate and professional. Forget novice – it's a little too slow and doesn't do the game



The red car and the blue car had a race. All red wants to do is stuff his face. He eats everything he sees, from cars to prickly trees



justice. In fact, it had most of the PlayStation Pro team fooled into thinking it wasn't much of a game at all for the first few minutes of play. Select intermediate level, however, and the pace moves up a gear. This gives you a better feel of how Speedster plays and after a couple of hours you should be ready to move up into professional level where it really comes into its own as a quality racer.

The eight varied courses open for competition remain the same regardless of the difficulty, the only gameplay difference being the speed – it becomes much trickier to manoeuvre the vehicles successfully. The satisfaction gained therefore, from winning a high speed split screen challenge is pretty immense.

Before moving completely away from the difficulty level, there's a useful feature worth mentioning. If one or both of you are newcomers to the game and you want to even up the odds a little so neither lags hopelessly behind, keep the 'slow car boost' option on. This means that whenever an appreciable lead is built up, the car languishing in second becomes capable of a much higher top speed than the one in front, thus narrowing the gap to keep up interest levels. Remember to turn it off after a while though as 'pure' racing with both of you selecting the same vehicle is the only way to find out who is the true champion.

Players are given the choice of performance

cars or more off the wall/off road vehicles in a race to glory. There are four in each category, although the performance cars cannot race against the heavy metal vehicles which is a bit of a shame.

As PlayStation gamers have come to expect, there are noticeable differences in grip, handling, acceleration and top speed for each vehicle. Mastering the powerslide – skidding around corners at dangerously high speeds without spinning off – is of utmost importance the higher the level of difficulty.

Each scenario is fully 3-D and they're all a gradient-fest. Let me explain. From the snow, mud, mountains and waterfalls of Tuscan Gorge to the warehouses and cargo holds of Pacific Dream, each circuit is undulating, with jumps, ramps, bridges and slopes to cope with. The Golden Sands course even has roundabouts to negotiate and as wise old Steve McNally commented, "Any race game with roundabouts in has got to be good". The lad from Salford also reckons the game is reminiscent of the Amiga classic Nitro, which curiously enough was also published by Psygnosis.

Psygnosis' previous PlayStation race efforts mentioned in the first paragraph have all been hailed as benchmark racing titles for both ▶



Add an 'a' to make 'slag', add a 'u' to make 'slug' or add an 'o' to make 'slog'. Alternatively, concentrate on winning the race



There's no noticeable difference in speed between single and two player mode – you just get to see more of the track in single player



Not only does the Tuscan Gorge take you through mountain ranges...



...it also winds through a large pair of breathtaking waterfalls



There's a sharpish left turn ahead, you start steering now



Red's in eighth place for now, but six of the seven cars ahead are only yards ahead. What are you waiting for? Put your pedal to the metal!

This screenshot, taken from the preview version, shows an awkward view angle that Psygnosis eventually left out

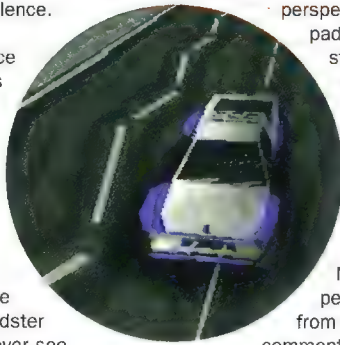
Speedster

► playability and graphical excellence. Speedster looks and plays differently to any PlayStation race game I've seen and although its style is more retro than bang up-to-date or futuristic, the top-down view angle means that the minutely detailed scenery never 'builds' in the distance.

Imagine watching a real-life rally from a helicopter which somehow manages to keep pace with the cars – that's how Speedster looks. When playing, you can never see that far ahead as showing more of the track from a bird's eye view would reduce your car to the size of a Lilliputian's Micro Machine. This isn't a problem, however, as yellow and black icons appear telling you how the track is about to curve ahead.

Playing each track a few times imprints on your brain where you need to ease off the gas anyway – if you insist on smashing into everything on the way, smoke will start billowing out of your exhaust, getting thicker the more damage you suffer. Your car's performance will reduce markedly, eventually coming to a complete halt, meekly handing victory to your opponent.

Comparisons with the Mighty Micro Machines v3 (MMv3) are inevitable, but unjustified as the gameplay is completely different. For a start, each race flows rather than stopping and starting every five seconds and for another thing steering is done in the same way as 'driver's

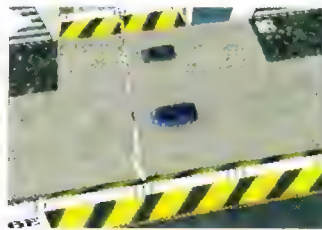


perspective' games with left on the d-pad actually corresponding to steering to the left rather than the awkward state of affairs that Codemasters expects us to struggle with.

I'll concede that MMv3 is a braver effort in terms of the game engine and unusual 3-D graphics used, but in terms of gameplay, Speedster hammers MMv3. Obviously, that's a personal point of view as you'll see from some of the dissenting comments by the fools I'm forced to work with, but I'm sticking by it.

Let's be honest, any game supported by a marketing (hype) campaign as all-encompassing and in-your-face as MMv3 will prove popular. Speedster, on the other hand, will quietly slip onto the shelves but should do okay sales-wise by totally honest means – that is, through good reviews and enthusiastic word of mouth.

Two blue cars seen on Hacienda dance floor shocker!



There are eight courses to pick from, one of which is the challenging Pacific Dream. Pacific nightmare more like...



Two of the 'heavy metal' class of vehicles – they're slower than the performance cars

Probably the most visually impressive course – night time in downtown San Francisco



GENRE COMPARISON

Game Street Racer
Software House Ubisoft

The action is a little too frantic at times, rendering the special attacks too random. Although there are plenty of modes of play, options and configurable elements it still doesn't hold a candle to the likes of RRR and Wipeout 2097 – it's not fast enough and, unlike Speedster, the scenarios are noticeably flat



PRO SCORE

GAME Speedster

GENRE Racing

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis

CONTACT 0151 282 3000

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION Speedster got off APPROVED to a bad start in

the office as it came in on one of those dull, depressing days when everyone's got their cynical head on. Oh, it's so slow, they cried. What's this? It's hardly Micro Machines, is it? Well no, it isn't, but as I said earlier it's not meant to be.

Admittedly, it's less than impressive in novice mode speed-wise but it still plays reasonably well. Change up into intermediate and then professional mode, and it's as fast and furious as any race game should be without the cars being nigh on impossible to control. In conclusion, it's the best split-screen racer since Need For Speed and, if anything, marginally better than Street Racer.

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8



DAN Apart from the fact that you need to up the difficulty level to get any real speed, Speedster's biggest downfall is that it's just so dull. If you like driving round in circles at an average pace then you'll love this

JAY If you want a good split-screen racer, then wait for NFS2 or indeed, Porsche Challenge. I found this way too slow to warrant any excitement and I'm not the only one either. Speedster? More like Snailster

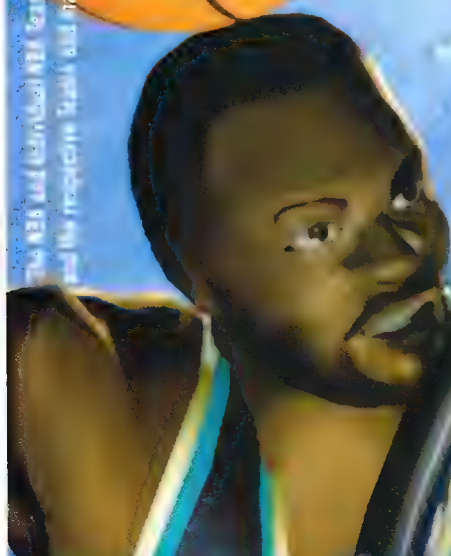
STEVE Top quality two player race action and not half bad on your own either. Ignore the others whining on about how it's not fast enough, because it is. Any quicker and it would have been far too difficult

ANDY No enjoyment can be gained from Sunday driving around bland circuits. The views are also pretty limited and although it looks okay you're probably better off playing Ayrton Senna Kart Duel if speed is your thing

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"THE SEQUEL TO THE WORLD'S FINEST BASKETBALL SIM"

Official PlayStation Magazine

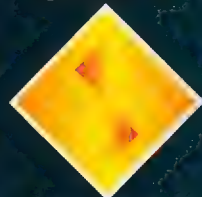


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COMPUTER
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 **TOTAL
NBA '97**



DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

Lifeforce: Tenka

You are a super-hard cyber-warrior of the future. You have a big gun. You have funny voices inside your head. You are, predictably, the bloke in Psygnosis' new 'Doom 'em-up'

If there's one thing we can all agree on, it's that futuristic genetics corporations creating super-soldiers for nefarious purposes are a bad idea. A really bad idea. The side effects of such goings on can prove disastrous. Just look at Jean-Claude Van Damme. Definitely a swimmer in the shallow end of the gene pool. Similar shenanigans are afoot out in space.

On the colonised planet of Extrevius 328-B, the planned life of idyllic space-lounging has given way to constant rain and gloom. Which suits evil genetics corporation Trojan Inc just fine. They've chosen the planet as the headquarters for their DNA experiments on humans, the result of which will be a lethal bionoid army.

But not everyone is happy with this

arrangement. A bloke named Tenka, for instance, finds the whole affair rather distasteful and joins a militant rebel faction to sort out Trojan once and for all. The rebels give him a prototype war-suit (a bit tight on the hips but otherwise simply divine for summer functions) and a brain implant called Zenith. Off he goes, ready to shoot and run about a lot.

Now the situation in the 'industry' at the moment can be summed up via a long-winded and ultimately pointless metaphor. OK, imagine a female dog. Nice ears, wet nose, a right little saucepot by all accounts. This randy dog, going by the catchy name of 'PlayStation Doom-style Games', has been on heat and done the 'wild thing' with every canine stud in town. As a result of this rumpo-frenzy, our dog has given

birth to loads of little puppies, each bearing the unique characteristics of their respective fathers. So in recent months she's spawned puppies called Dark Forces, Disruptor and Hexen. Cute critters, each and every one, if rather difficult to house train.

And now here's the latest fruit of her doggy loins, shimmying out of the game-womb. Let's call it Tenka eh? Can we keep it, Dad? Can we? Can we pleaseeease? Well, let's wait and see if it's the runt of the litter, or the top dog first. We might have to throw it in the canal yet.

It certainly looks like the pick of the bunch. Whereas the others rely on plain old sprites, resulting in hideous blockiness up close, Tenka revels in a veritable orgy of polygons and 3-D spunkiness. Psygnosis is obviously delighted

with this result, even going as far as sending us a list which showed just why Tenka is better than every similar game on the PlayStation. Cheers.

Worryingly, this list concentrates on such pressing topics as the presence of laser sighting or on-screen radar. Rather than anything crazy like gameplay. And, surprisingly, Tenka wins hands down in Psygnosis' handy list. Well, smarty Scouse monkey boys, flashy looks might be enough to

win a prize for Coat Shineness at Crufts, but it ain't worth diddly squat if our Tenka puppy goes and tiddles on the carpet. Thankfully, it doesn't. Although there was a period of uncertainty for the first few plays.

It looked for a while that Tenka might not only wee on the carpet but that it might 'follow through' and even be sick. Because once you've got over the admittedly gorgeous light sourced graphics, the first few levels are pretty bland. Feeble robots buzz about, more like miserable wasps than lethal killing machines, and a few shots gets rid of them. Your gun remains as a resolutely non-macho shotgun thing for ages and there's a vague feeling that you're not actually going anywhere. This made my first few plays pretty dull and disappointing experiences.

In fact, this is the game's greatest problem so we might as well deal with it now. Not enough happens to grab your attention straight away. Shockingly, it wasn't until I reached level 10 that I was blessed with any new weapons. Which is more than a little cheeky.

The enemies remain locked in the 'nasty robot' or 'nasty bloke' veins, and the seedy hotels and factories of the early levels soon give way to those ever popular corridors and tunnels. In other words, Doom by-numbers – with fewer

That weird blue thing is a, surprise, robot sentry surrounded by a shield. Dead easy to get rid of



One of the few genuinely interesting foes, you can shoot the legs off this Thing-esque beast for a laugh





Your violent quest will take you through such hazardous locales as underground caverns...



...via ultra-hi tech military facilities teeming with mutants and lethal gun placements...



...and, of course, the sci-fi tunnels and corridors familiar from every other Doom clone...



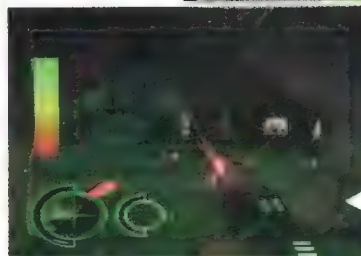
...where you'll face vicious cyborgs like this fella, hiding in the shadows like an evil Hank Marvin



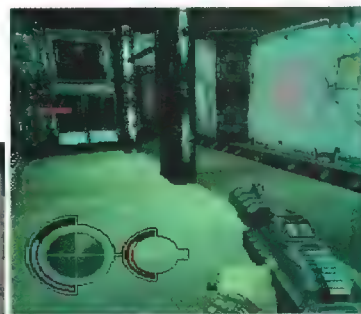
The laser sight allows you to target and pick off baddies in the distance. The green box shows you when you've got 'em targetted



The laser is one of the handiest weapons, and it looks lovely. Pity you don't get one sooner...



One of the rare moments when you can see the detail on the bloke you're shooting. He's a robot, naturally



The light sourcing is lovely, but it means that a lot of the game takes place in the gloom



enemies and boring weapons. Don't get me wrong, it's technically superb. Full freedom of vision, smooth polygons, some clever bits of level design and all that stuff. It's just a pity that you have to wait so long for any real heart-pumping action.

When they do eventually start turning up, the weapons are nifty, if unoriginal. A nice touch is the way your gun morphs to suit each attachment. Instead of switching from one gun to another, you use the same gun throughout. The L1 button brings up a menu from where you can select the various functions and then, Gobot style, your gun shunts and slides into a new configuration. Which is pleasant, if cosmetic. Your gun also comes equipped with a laser sight which can be used to target distant enemies. This can be a blessing and a curse. It's ideal for picking off the bigger baddies before they see you coming, but the reverse is also true.

The game is very picky about accuracy, so ►



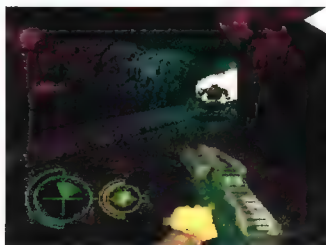
Lifeforce: Tenka

► you can spend ages, and waste loads of precious ammo, trying to take out a gun turret before you realise that the sight is a millimetre too low and you've been busy shooting the wall. And with the turret pummelling you at the same time, you can really do without this sort of pickiness.

OK, time out. I realise that this hasn't been the most positive start to a review, and it's with good reason. This is a highly competitive genre and if you're going to claim to be the best then you'd better have the muscle to back up the claim. There are good points to Tenka, plenty of them as it happens, but I'm rather enjoying the bad points at the moment so bear with me a while longer.

The enemies, right, are nowhere near as varied as they should be. The idea of storming a genetics laboratory throws open the possibility for plenty of weird and wicked monsters. And this opportunity is missed. With the notable exception of some stomach churning 'heads on spider legs' early on, the foes you meet are mostly robots and vaguely monstrous blokes. They are, to be blunt, too bloody ordinary and not even slightly scary.

Finally on my 'grumble pile', the game's just a tad too easy. There's no difficulty setting, so you get what yer given, and it's hardly a huge challenge. I'm no expert at these games (reaching level four of Dark Forces is my usual performance) and yet I managed to reach level 12 of this after two days play. Maybe it's got something to do with the way some enemies will just stand there and take bullets without fighting back. Maybe it's just that I've been visited by

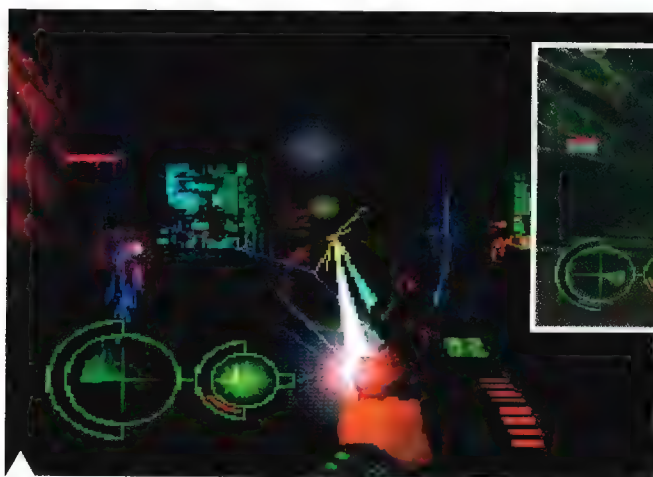


You can duck, jump and sidestep to dodge incoming attacks, and also to surprise monsters

the magic game fairies in the night and I've suddenly become a joypad whizz. I doubt it somehow.

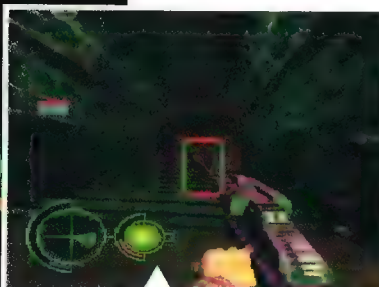
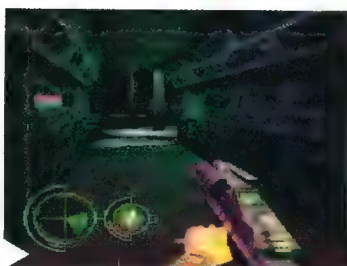
Anyway, enough moaning. Let's be nice as the end of review approaches. As I've mentioned, Tenka looks great. The light sourcing works a treat, creating a pretty convincing game world to play in. The light and shadow can make certain moments quite tense and there are some frankly lovely laser effects to brighten up the gloom. The later levels show some ingenuity, involving collecting and disarming bombs, and once you've ploughed through the routine levels things do pick up a bit.

I know that I've spent more time criticising than praising, and Tenka is a pretty fantastic game. It's just such a pity to see a great 3D engine used for such a generic and lifeless idea. If things got going a bit sooner, with bigger guns and more original baddies, this would be an easy winner. As it is, it's as good as all the other Doom wannabes and better than most, but despite its graphical poshness it never really grips you. Shame, really.



As mentioned many times, light sourcing = splendid. Here's a shot demonstrating why

The radar (bottom left) warns you what lies ahead, so you're always prepared



The shoulder buttons allow you to look up and down, essential given the number of ramps and drops in the game

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Dark Forces
Software House Virgin

Marred only by some very blocky graphics, this takes the Star Wars universe and let's you play a part. It's got more atmosphere and variety than Tenka, and is a lot harder, but loses out on the presentation front. If I had to choose, Dark Forces would win by a nose

PRO SCORE

GAME Lifeforce: Tenka
GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis
CONTACT 0151 282 5000
RELEASE DATE May
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION Certainly the most visually stunning 3-

D blaster on the PlayStation, it's just a pity that the actual game inside all the fancy wrapping is a bit nondescript. It may have light sourcing, polygons and all that, but it lacks pace, atmosphere and visceral impact. You'll get your money's worth and it is a good game, it's just nothing terribly exciting. The story is vague, so you never really know why you're doing things, although some of the more puzzle-based missions are quite clever. It is a worthy addition to the genre and one that puts some of the competition in the shade, just bear in mind that this doesn't really bring anything new to the party apart from a nice frock.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 7



STEVE Yeah, yeah. It's a Doom clone with a 3-D engine and reasonable graphics, but it's deathly boring after about five seconds... Is it just me or are all first person perspective shoot'em-ups identical these days?

JAY Exactly what you'd expect from this sort of title really; You run around loads of dark corridors shooting everything that moves. It's fun alright, but as with all games of the genre, the excitement is short-lived

ANDY After a few plays it became a little tiresome. Tenka has stunning graphics and gameplay to match but it lacks that killer instinct which it requires. It still warrants a recommendation and will appeal to many

ALEX Certainly one of the better 3-D search and destroyers available, I'd stick it higher on my shopping list than Epidemic (also reviewed this ish) but probably not as high as a six pack of mini jaffa cakes

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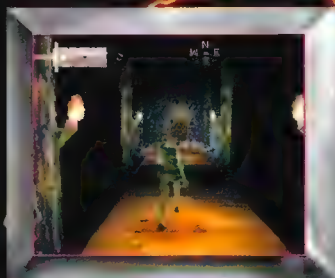
Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make *Excalibur 2555AD* an absolute epic.

Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" **EDGE**

"...has atmosphere in spades"

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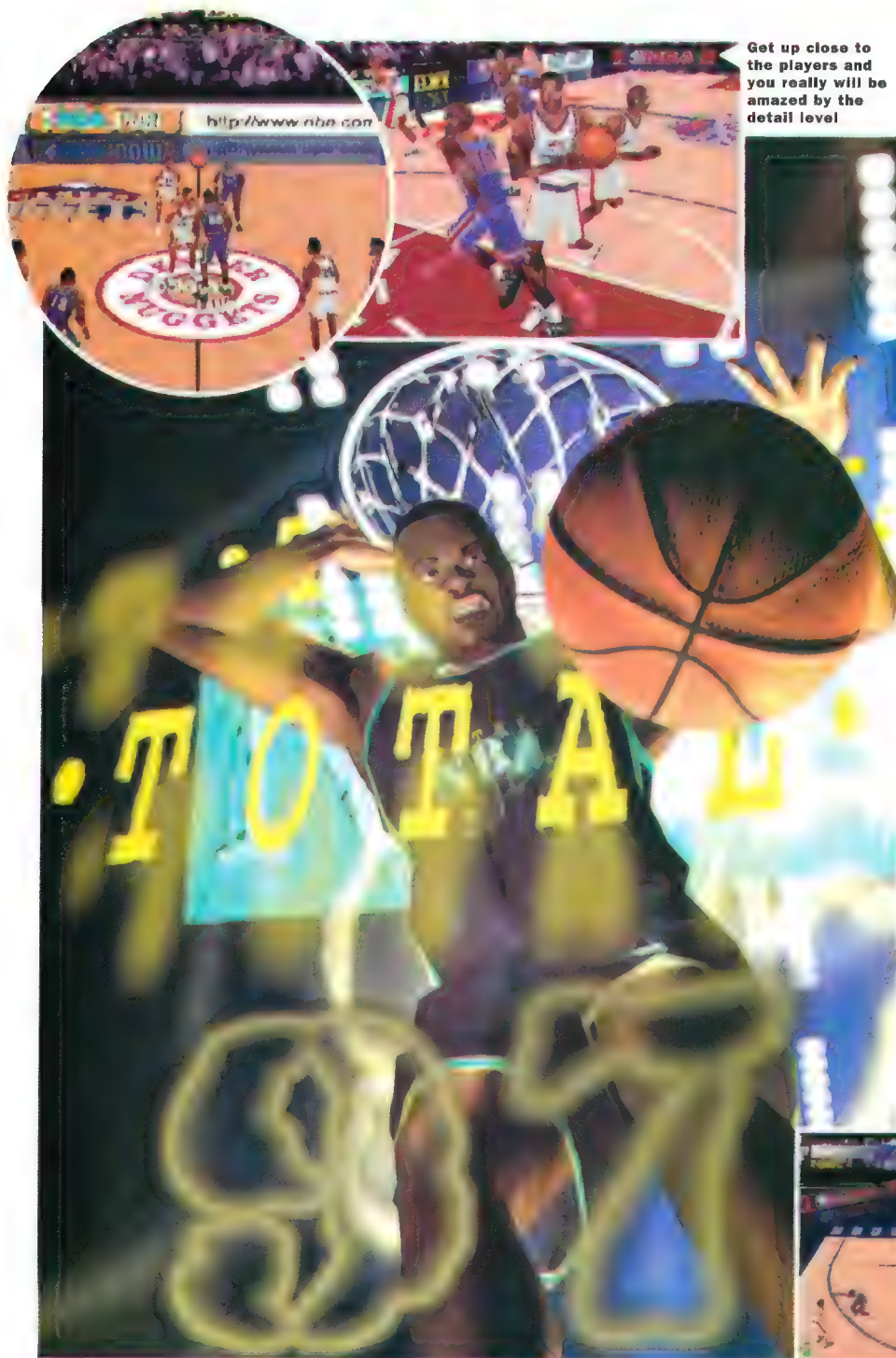
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Total NBA '97

Be warned, this review has a very high praise content. If you don't like to read wholly positive remarks, I suggest you turn the page because this game is nothing short of stunning



Get up close to the players and you really will be amazed by the detail level

I reckon I've written more reviews of basketball games than any other type. And I'm not just talking about specific types, such as football games, I'm talking genres. Don't ask me why, but software publishers seem to haemorrhage the damn things at a rate not dissimilar to a haemophilic who's been really careless with a sharp knife.

Not that I'm complaining mind. I like them, and indeed would be hard pressed to pick a favourite. At least I would have been until the second instalment of Sony's own Total NBA series slam dunked its way into the office. Without getting ahead of myself I'll just say that Total NBA '97 is so far in front of the competition at the moment that it's difficult to see what they can do to catch up. Especially when you consider that by the time they've had a chance to respond the Total team will have had the same amount of time to work on their next version as well! Frightening.

This constant striving to be the best in a very narrow field has been great news for basketball fans but must have been a nightmare for those who dislike the sport. There have been at least three other series of games of note (NBA Live, NBA Jam and my own personal favourite, NBA In the Zone) besides Total, and even a couple of so far standalone efforts such as BMG's Slam 'n Jam. All these have had their own individual merits and not one could have been described as anything less than a good game.

So what is it that makes the 1997 version of Total NBA stand head and shoulders above the already decidedly lanky competitors? What new innovations make it so much better? Is it, as



With Dunk replays on you'll see each moment of glory again just mere seconds after it happens



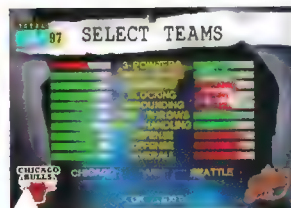
You can view the action from just about any conceivable distance and angle you can think of

GENRE COMPARISON

Game NBA In the Zone 2
Software House Konami

The only game that even comes close to Total NBA in PlayStation Pro's opinion takes a more arcadey approach but is no less praiseworthy as a result. Great fun and marginally easier to get into we reckon you should avoid making a choice and buy both of these stunning games!

Learn how to take advantage of a breakaway and you'll find it much easier to stay in contention



Before the game the team stats are compared

they say, the shoes? Well, that's a difficult question to answer because although it is much better than any of the other contenders, there's little in the way of new stuff and as far as I can see, their footwear is pretty much the same as everyone else's.

The truth is that it does everything every other game does, but does it a lot better. The graphics are astounding, the sound effects superb, the commentator enthusiastic, varied and never annoying, the gameplay is spot on, the control method is intuitive and just about perfect once you get the hang of it, the learning curve is set just right... The list goes on and on but I'm assuming you've got the picture by now.

I won't waste too much time going into the basics because the setup is the same as in all the others. A quick run through of the options is necessary though to set your minds at rest. So, you can play a full season, exhibition match or just the playoffs with any of the 27 official NBA teams made of some 350 or so real players.

As usual you can customise the rules allowing as much or as little interference from the officials as suits your style of play and there are numerous difficulty levels to ease you gently into the action. Enough? If not I'll just say that the structure of the game is almost identical to half a dozen other games that have been out in the past so you can fill in the blanks for yourselves.

Now then, on to the impressive stuff. Most of the advances over last years Total NBA are, it has to be said, aesthetic. From the moment the rendered intro sequence bursts onto the screen you know you're going to be in for a graphical

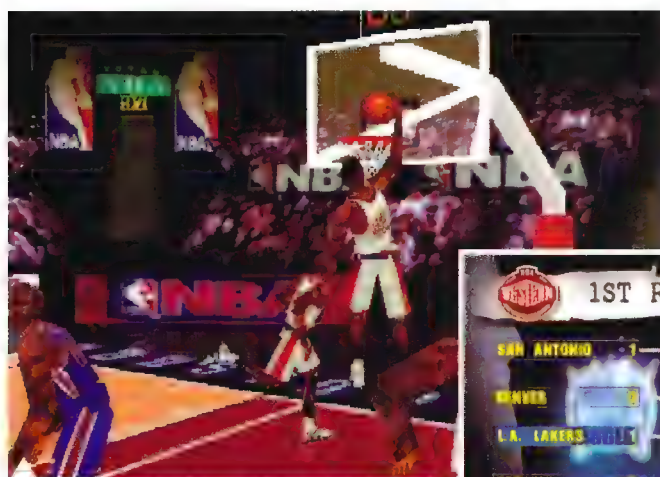
treat, but even as you progress through the
 stylish menu screens and team match ups
 (accompanied by digitised photographs of all the
 players) nothing prepares you for the leap
 forward that the in-game graphics have taken.

From one of the further camera angles everything looks superb, but it's not until you get in close that you'll start to be really impressed. Not only are the on-screen players the correct height, weight and colour in relation to their real life counterparts, they've also had the players' faces digitised and texture mapped onto the body! This means that each and every player in the game looks exactly like they do in real life. Incredible stuff.

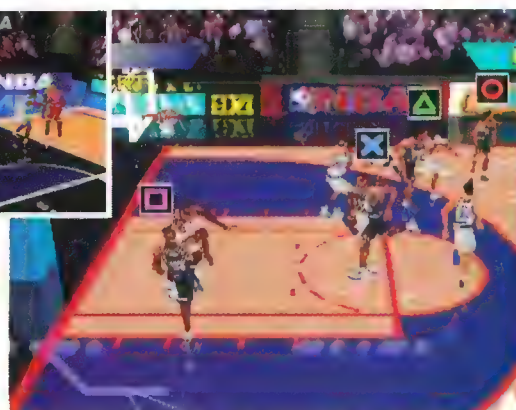
The courts also are stunning, accurate recreations of proper arenas, complete with floor markings, crowds and even exits. Add to that some of the best motion capture animation you're ever likely to see (including a number of semi-spectacular dunks, although nothing impossible, Total NBA is heavy on the realism) and some brilliant lighting and reflection effects and you've got what I seriously consider to be the most graphically impressive game yet seen on the PlayStation, not just of the basketball variety, but of any style.

Sound wise the game is flawless too with all the right noises in all the right places. The ball thuds convincingly off the court surface, the announcer gets suitably excited as the tension mounts and has even recorded the player names (and nicknames) in several different states of agitation and of course, the trainers squeak almost constantly.

In terms of controls the game is complex



The detail in the background is nothing short of incredibly detailed. There's even an exit for the fans to leave by should they get bored



Here's Icon passing demonstrated in all its glory. Tap the button corresponding to the symbol to pass

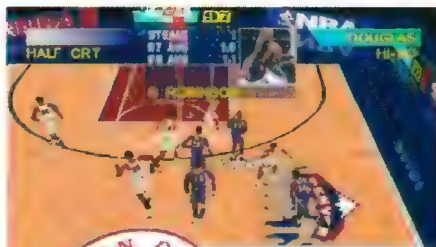
The Playoffs are in as you would expect, allowing you to skip the entire season if you want

Total NBA '97

► but not overly so. The buttons have different uses depending on whether you're on defence or attack (ie have the ball, or don't) and there are individual buttons for pass, shoot, block, steal, pass and speed up. Handily the shoulder buttons are used to change team tactics 'on the fly' if you're that way inclined helping tremendously in giving the game a real flow and removing the need to be constantly pausing if things aren't going your way. These range from simple instructions to individual players (such as make a dash for the basket to receive an 'alley-oop' pass) to instructing the whole team to reshuffle their defensive tactics and man to man marking style.

At first this can be a little overwhelming and you'll initially be confused by what seems like a multitude of controls (I was) but there's even something to help you get to grips with this. In the options menu you can turn on something called on-screen help. This displays what a press of any of the buttons will do at that particular time in the top left hand corner of the screen. This changes accordingly, depending on whether you're attacking or defending so if ever you get caught wondering what button you should press to pass, a quick glance will provide the answer. I'm not saying this will stop you making mistakes because it won't (I still find myself shooting from under my own basket at times instead of passing) but it does make the learning process so much easier.

Perhaps the one innovation in the way the actual game plays is a new system called icon passing. You can still pass in the normal manner (point your player in the appropriate direction and press in this case the circle to launch a pass that way) but if you want to get a little bit more fancy you can hold down Left 2 to bring up a set of icons. Each of the other four players on your team is assigned an icon which



Each player has been photographed and digitised giving the game a real televisual feel to it



Rejecting shots can be tricky at first, but you'll soon learn to time it to give yourself a chance

corresponds to one of the buttons, and a quick press of that button will send a pass flying to that particular player. This gives you much more control over the general play and is perhaps the crowning glory of this superb game.

There's loads more I could say but I'm running out of space. I'll just quickly mention the one criticism which was pointed out to me by Alex (as it's almost totally unnoticeable when you're wrapped up in the action) and that is the players not directly involved in the play stand stock still, looking more like waxworks than the smoothly animated ultra realistic characters that they'll become the second the ball gets within a certain distance of them. It's such a minor criticism though that it's almost embarrassing to mention it, and it should in no way affect your decision to buy it.

Total NBA '97 is so much better than '96 that it's going to be a real job to bring it on the same distance again next year.

PRO SCORE

GAME Total NBA '97
GENRE Sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
CONTACT 0171 447 1600
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED It's difficult to see a better basketball

game being possible on the PlayStation but with the way things keep progressing I certainly wouldn't bet money against it.

Total NBA '97 is such an enormous leap forward over the original that it causes me to say that even if you own the first one I'd still recommend you have a very serious look at this - and that's something that I thought I'd never hear myself say! This is as perfect a basketball sim as you could ever hope for but with some of the biggest and best names in the business trying to top it who knows what's going to happen. For the time being though fans of the sport have yet again got a reason to be cheerful.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8



ALEX Certainly the best-looking basketball sim on the PlayStation, I'm unconvinced that gameplay-wise it offers anything new. I hate the way the defenders are 'frozen in time' before the ball reaches them as well

DAN As far as classy presentation goes, this takes the basketball biscuit. Definitely the most realistic b-ball sim yet, so enthusiasts should add this to their shopping lists pronto. Normal people might quite like it as well

JAY A vast improvement on the original with gorgeous looking graphics, a player-friendly configuration and bags and bags of pure rim shaking gameplay. It's far better than any other basketball offering so far too

ANDY This is definitely the best basketball game I've ever seen. Not just on the PlayStation but on any of the other formats I've ever played on. Even the Gameboy! It looks absolutely brilliant!

Cock a Hoop!

You will be if you're one of the five lucky winners in our competition! If you are you'll find an official, top quality Spalding NBA Basketball and a copy of Total NBA '97 dropping through your letterbox very soon (assuming of course that you've got a reasonably sizeable, round shaped letterbox that is).

All you have to do to win is tell us which NBA superstar occasionally appears for the second half with different coloured hair than he had in the first? Jot your answer down on a piece of paper and send it to the usual address, marking your envelope Dennis Rodman Competition. Ooh, it's a tricky one! I wonder if we'll even get five correct answers this time?



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This is a city with a secret. The children that used to crowd its streets are vanishing one by one, and no one knows where or why they've gone.

Perhaps Miette, a streetwise kid with a knack for petty theft could be the one with the skill and cunning to solve the mystery. But can a child

survive in such a strange and fantastical city, full of dangerous characters? Is she up to such a bizarre mission?

Or, more to the point, are you?

The City of Lost Children



PC
CD
ROM

Allied General

Anyone remember Panzer General? Didn't think so. Here's a rehash of it anyway where, once again, we have the chance to take part in some Second World War strategy



A sea battle ensues. It's not a bad idea to clear the seas of enemy sea vessels so you can begin hammering ground targets in safety



The menus can give you the information you need to help your battle strategy take shape



The first North African battle is the easiest to complete in the entire game. The Italians prove they should stick to pizza and football

Here we are at this most perilous and bloody time in history. Squabbles boiled over and some bloke called Adolf Hitler needed a good kicking. Most of the world was on hand to assist in this task until the Italians and the Japanese joined in against the Allied forces. If you think you could handle the battles better than they did, here's your chance to prove yourself.

If you hadn't realised, this is a little more complicated than making a quick substitution and formation change in a footie game. Tactics will play a large part in your success or failure and these tactics must be learned through trial and error.

Initially you will be wondering what you have to do to win a campaign but after a while it all begins to make (some) sense. You begin in North Africa and work your way to both the Eastern and Western fronts where the opposition is ready and waiting and more than a little intimidating. They are well and truly dug in and won't move without a fight. A big fight at that. The more you advance through the campaigns the tougher they become. They also become more diverse with ships and aircraft, among other things. This is where the campaigns then become impossibly difficult.

If you are someone who relishes hours of strategic planning and watching the plans come into fruition, this is the sort of game that may appeal to you. Even when the action is at its peak though, it is laboured and slow. The

explosions and carnage may be enjoyable but once you've seen them but you aren't going to see anything new in future attacks.

You may think you're on for a sure win when the battle predictions appear, but suddenly you're shown some special reserves of defence and find yourself severely short-handed – just one of those things that happens from time to time in a war. You will then have to rethink how you rearrange your troops and use your attacks.

Graphically it's unspectacular, looking something like an old Amiga game. The sound is also far from inspiring and although these are secondary aspects behind the gameplay, it may have worked better if the gameplay was as simple as the graphics and sound. Whereas the basics are simple to execute – click on the area your soldiers are situated in and then click on where you want them to go – it's the intricacies of the option menu you can bring up which will leave most people baffled.

Allied General is reminiscent of a chess game – soldiers, artillery and tanks can all move at different speeds. The battle zone is broken up by a number of evenly placed hexagons. These are in fact the 'squares' over which your army advances. Tanks can obviously reach further into the battlefield than your artillery, which can only plod along one section at a time.

Attacking the enemy can only be done if you are in an adjoining section, but the artillery can be a couple of spaces away to inflict some far more lethal shells onto an unsuspecting enemy

After some intense shelling, the enemy surrenders to your superior gunfire. Unfortunately the rest of the units fight on



An air attack is never as effective as you'd like it to be. On the rare successful missions you can bring your ground units into the action to mop up



Before a battle begins, the predicted results are shown. The enemy should take a pounding here. But don't take that as a guarantee

stronghold. Then the infantry can step in and clear up the remainders.

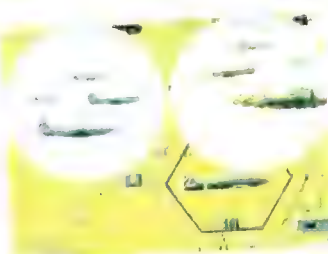
Unlike the Second World War, here you are allocated a set number of moves in which to complete your mission. If you don't complete the objectives in the given time you are automatically defeated. This can be annoying if they have a single unit in the city you are attacking while you have clearly put up a siege with numerous units including tanks and aircraft right on the doorstep. Guess who loses? Yes, you. Obviously.

Apart from this it's a standard tit for tat affair with you attacking and getting into better fighting positions and then waiting for the enemy to do the same. And that's all there is to it really. Occasionally the battle predictions are completely inaccurate, they don't take into account some rugged defence from both sides as there's no way of knowing about it beforehand. This is no doubt supposed to add some kind of random element to the proceedings but can also mean the difference between winning or losing.

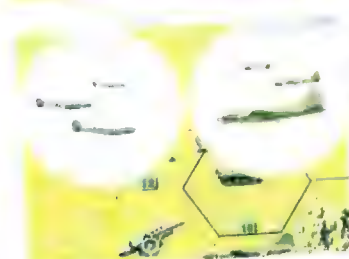
All things considered, Allied General is a direct copy of Panzer General in terms of both graphics and gameplay. It adds nothing to its predecessor in any way, the only difference is there are new campaigns for the player to battle through. Neither are bad games, they're just a little tedious and won't necessarily appeal to many.



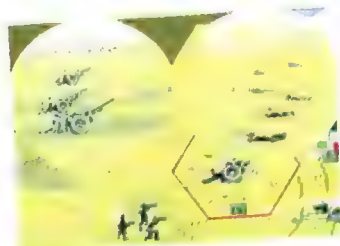
Your units are always on the right during a battle when you play as the allies



One of your planes is downed by an enemy fighter. What could you do to gain revenge?



Air battles come into play on the tougher missions. Victory is a hard fought battle with serious losses



The artillery can be one of the most effective attacks as it can fire from a distance

PRO SCORE

GAME Allied General

GENRE Strategy

SOFTWARE HOUSE Mindscape

CONTACT 01444 246333

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £39.99

Being a military strategist is obviously a pretty daunting task for anyone but if you've ever thought you could better Montgomery and his buddies, you can now put your theories to the test. This is all well and good but the PlayStation can handle some impressive graphics and gameplay so then why does Allied General look and play like an old Amiga game? It's basically a trial and error affair which after a while falls nicely into place, but whether anyone would bother playing for this length of time however is another matter. Anyone who owns Panzer General will know exactly what's in store. Anybody who doesn't already own Panzer General obviously won't want to and won't want this either. It's as simple as that.

GRAPHICS 5

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 6

LASTABILITY 5

5

DAN Stop it. Stop it right now. You've got a 32bit super console to work with, and this is the best you can do? Maybe the strategy side of things is sound, but for Christ's sake, do something about those prehistoric graphics

JAY As long as you've got the likes of Command & Conquer to play with, or the excellent Worms for that matter, then I can see no point whatsoever in investing in this bland, visually-unimpressive dog of a game

ALEX One for the fans of old board game Risk - and no-one else - really. It's a turn-based effort that lacks any excitement or addictive qualities. As humdrum as they come, Allied General can't be recommended

STEVE Alright if you fancy a quick bout of 'fighting on the beaches' but this is too in-depth and ponderous for the majority of PlayStation gamers. Not really the game's fault though and it'll find its own little market

Rage Racer

Longer tracks, a new range of selectable cars and the option to mess around under the bonnet should make Namco's latest Racer the best yet. Shouldn't it?



Eagerly awaited and possibly the best racing game we're gonna see this year (despite the huge list of similar forthcoming time wasters), Namco's latest Ridge Racer incarnation sure looks the business. Arcade perfect in every way, *Rage Racer* takes the player on a high-speed journey around a small variety of race courses on a mission to get to the top of the pile once again. Several new additions have been made to the trusty Ridge Racer formula, giving players a more worthwhile and better value-for-money product than the previous two games in the series. Something which has been a long time coming.

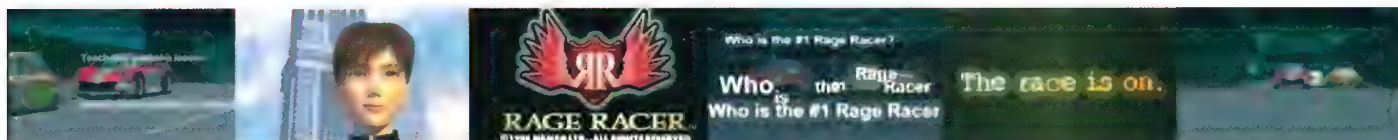
Converting a popular arcade game for a home system is a fairly low-risk venture. If the game has gone down well as a free standing coin guzzler, the odds are it'll prove equally as popular on a console. So with that in mind, Namco started to churn out these racing spectaculars to a growing user base that were gagging for a good bit of driving action. And as you all know, they sold by the bucketload.

After the first one proved to be a PlayStation smash hit all over the globe, I felt that Namco got a bit lazy. In all honesty, Ridge

Chasing expensive sports cars round hairpin bends is risky. The insurance alone is terrifying



And Now, A Word From Our Sponsors...



The Namco logo fades to black and that thumping techno theme tune blares from your speakers... The race is indeed on, and a colourful display of racey babes, speedy cars and weird typography hits you from every angle, urging you to play. Oh, go on then...





Once you've progressed a bit into the game, you can race any of your cars on any track in any class. And that's neat



The internal view makes everything whizz past at a ridiculous pace, especially this cobble street

Racer was a one track game, had a small selection of cars with the option of extending the track (assuring you, ooh, about 30 seconds more play) once you'd hit all the relevant time records. It was new at the time, we all loved it, but it was easily forgotten. Next up came Ridge Racer Revolution offering a new track, the same option to extend (giving you longer play time, admittedly) and some hilarious buggies to drive once you'd entered a cheat. Ha ha, yeah great. Forty odd quid for something slightly different, oh yeah, cheers.

The fact remains that RRR should have been wildly more in-depth than it actually was. I for one felt that somewhere in the bowels of Namco HQ, a large crowd of programmers and designers were huddled around a surveillance monitor, splitting their sides with laughter when ever anyone bought a copy. I for one felt conned, disheartened and ultimately annoyed at the feeble 'new version' of my favourite driving game.

I wanted more. Much more. I could no longer see the point in just another Ridge Racer add on. So I told myself that I wasn't going to get all excited when this next one arrived. So when it did, well let's just say we didn't worry about champagne stains on the ceiling.

First impressions are that the general make

over of the game is an improvement. Players are now exposed to a reworked version, if you like, of the two previous Ridge Racer games, although this latest release gives you much much more than the other two put together. Unfortunately the Jap hardcore techno anthems are still in place, but the whole caboodle looks much better than before and substantial changes have been made making the game a good deal different.

Hang on, different? Have my prayers been answered at long last? Are we to witness a break from the norm here? Well, yes and no really. Gone are time based technicalities, the main aim of the game is now a mission to grab the first position, not only for the 'big head, look at me' factor, but because in Ridge Racer you need to score points in order to progress.

The game is split into four driving classes, each one upping the difficulty scale gradually. Points are earned for third, second and first place wins and once you've gathered enough wins you can upgrade your car via tune up options or simply trade it in and grab yourself a new set of wheels. Each car you purchase is stored within your inventory, allowing you to go back and use one of your older cars on



The finish line is in sight, but my car simply hasn't enough power to accelerate into victory. Oh bummer



Hard bends and tight corners hinder your progress no end, but master the art of drifting and everything will be fine

We can't make up our minds whether this car looks dead futuristic or really old fashioned



10th place? In that sleek sporty number? That's a bit poor, Mr Sharples



Rage Racer

► the different classes if you wish to. It's all a case of personal preference combined with the necessary horsepower to scoop first prize on the later levels.

Unfortunately, and in true Ridge Racer tradition, one main track is the base for all the driving classes. Extensions have been made to the track giving you, in theory, three different courses to race on with a bonus oval track coming into play later on. As mentioned earlier, the one track mode with short extensions was one of the main gripes with the other Namco racers, so this time they really are extended, giving gamers new scenery to gawp at including flowing waterfalls and spooky woodlands, plus a genuine bout of extended driving.

Scooping first place on all three tracks will see you leap into the next driving class where the tracks remain the same, but your opponents improve. Hence the reason to upgrade your car and feel the wind against your face at a faster pace. And speed up you will as the more expensive – and eventually accessible – cars on offer really rip up the track, clocking up speeds like you wouldn't believe.

Yes, thankfully, the somewhat plodding pace of its former PlayStation alter egos have gone, this latest coin-op conversion from the boys at Namco takes you on a rip-roarin' ride that frankly, leaves everything that's come before stalling on the starting grid. Everything else, does indeed, eat its dust on the speed stakes.

Players must also come to terms with what is known in Japanese racing circles as 'drifting'

(see diagram). This ability to conquer corners with ease is one trick you really do need to learn when competing for the Rage Racer crown. Bumping into bends and slamming walls as you accelerate out won't win you many first place positions. When you do collide with the scenery you don't grind to a virtual halt anymore and those precious recovery seconds are now vital to romping home first. Especially as the final straight is much shorter than ever before.

Upgrading and altering your car between races is another nice touch that has been added. Designing your own personalised car and tweaking its various attributes enhances the player interaction and, of course, will add to the perceived short lived lastability of titles such as these. Namco no longer wants you to simply complete all the tracks on offer and then move onto something new. It wants you to mess around with this one, take your time, plan your racing strategy, earn points, build the best car and then become a winner. Thankfully its plan seems to work.

It's no longer a case of fastest chap wins. You are your own boss here, you decide what happens with your car and you drive it too. Creating a winning team is a buzz – there's no denying that, but it's not half as much as a thrill as when you're driving it over the line to complete the final class. And it's not a simplistic 'put your foot down and steer' fiasco anymore, it has got much more involved and much more enjoyable to boot. Rejigged, reworked and genuinely improved (although not as much as some may of liked), Rage Racer will certainly satisfy the wannabe road hogs. Well, for now at least.

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Ridge Racer Revolution
Software House Namco

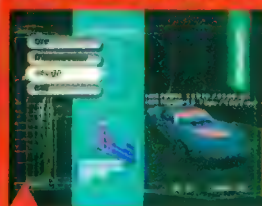
The second installment of the series is somewhat more basic than Rage, but offers a frantic and addictive racing experience that will please most PlayStation owners. Things get a little stale, what with only a single track to play on, but it's still worth a look.



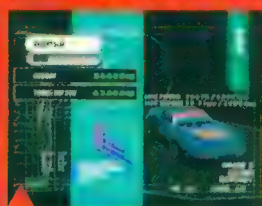
Ooh, the ladies like a shiny blue bonnet, don't they sir? Ooh, suits you sir. And so on...

Paint Your Wagon

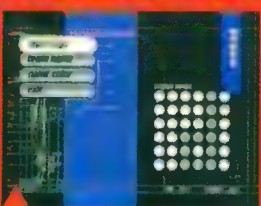
As well as competing under the bonnet of your chosen car, Ridge Racer also offers you the chance to fast track set up, design your very own personalised luge and choose from a wide range of paint jobs too. Like so...



1) Wheel your motor into the Customer Zone, and after you've tweaked your tires and transmission, hit the Design option.



2) If you have enough cash in the bank, you can now take up your lug, making it a much better overall performance. Then, enter the Design zone.



3) For starters, select the logo option from the list of choices on-screen.



4) Now you can either choose one of the range of characters to adorn your car or, if you fancy yourself as a bit of a pixel Picasso, create your own.



5) Next up, you get to do the same with the background. Pick one of the many options or do your own.



6) For nice looking and all round fast racing, you can choose to add a selected one and that's it all over.



7) Your next intention is to create an amusing or intimidating name for your racing team, such as Psycho, Killar or Big Bad's Coder.



8) Move over to the final step, where you can tamper with the car's exterior body colour using the on-screen palette.

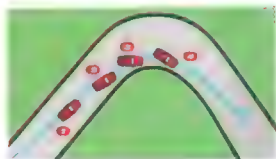


9) Once you've done that, you get the choice to change the car's line colours using the same method.



10) After you're ready finished playing with everything and you feel confident your car is the smartest ever seen, save it and hit the track!

Do Ya Catch My Drift?

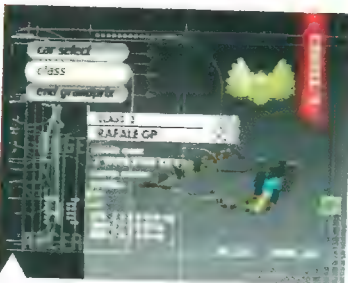


Swinging your car's back end around tight corners at high speed is a tricky little task to master, but practise will indeed make perfect. The technical term for doing what amounts to a fancy skid is known

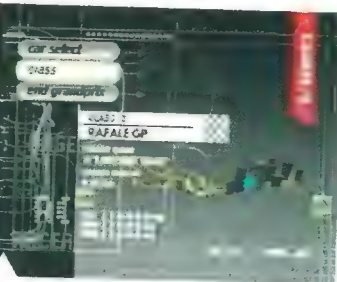
as drifting, and all you need to do to perform it is apply equal measures of both brake and acceleration, whilst making sure you hit the correct line when entering a bend. Fast acceleration is a must and sussing out when to hit the brakes and when to ease off is an important part of the drift phenomenon. Try it, you might like it.



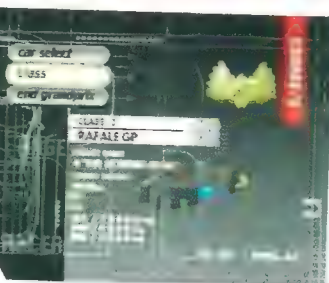
The Mythical Coast track is simplistic, allowing you to get to know your car



In true Ridge Racer tradition, the track extends itself as you progress



Rush past flowing waterfalls in this final extension. The scenery looks top



An added extra track is this oval. Put your foot down and avoid the traffic!



You can keep yer posh yuppie cars. This 70s pimp-mobile is scarily close to Jay's real car. In his mind



PRO SCORE

GAME Ridge Racer

GENRE Ooh, go on, guess

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony

CONTACT 0171 447 1600

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED

It may look like the others with

fancier graphics to you, but dig a little deeper and you'll find hours of genuine gameplay as you design, upgrade and race the car of your creation up through the various classes. The pace gets frantic once you've entered the final class (which is no plain sailing in itself) and even when you've claimed the Rage Racer crown for your own, I'm sure you'll still go back to it and work on those lap times until your thumbs fall apart. It may be bland to some, but to those of you who love games of the genre it's unmissable. You can say what you want about them churning out repetitive titles, but Namco has enlightened us all yet again.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 9



DAN I guess I must be one of those 'some' that Jay mentioned above. This is technically pretty, but terribly dull. Round and round in circles you go, and it just doesn't have any sense of competition. Over rated, I reckon

STEVE In some ways I wanted to hate this because the Ridge Racer games were so horribly over rated, but it slowly won me over and its increased depth over its brothers makes it a winner. Not worth nine though!

ALEX A typical over-reaction by Jay here. The game engine should have been stripped down and re-tuned if not re-invented from scratch by now. Ridge Racer was great for its time - this is only slightly above average

ANDY A worthy, if slightly pointless update of one of the best full on racing experiences available. If you have either of the previous games you could be advised to update. Just one thing though - Namco, enough now

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Atari Arcade's Greatest Hits

Time to walk down the road humming 'Don't You Want Me?' and stopping off at the arcade before going to the barber for a Phil Oakey flick

Missile Command

This game reminds me so much of old World War Two movies that it wouldn't be any surprise to me if I was told it had been developed in an air raid shelter. I'm not too keen on this one.

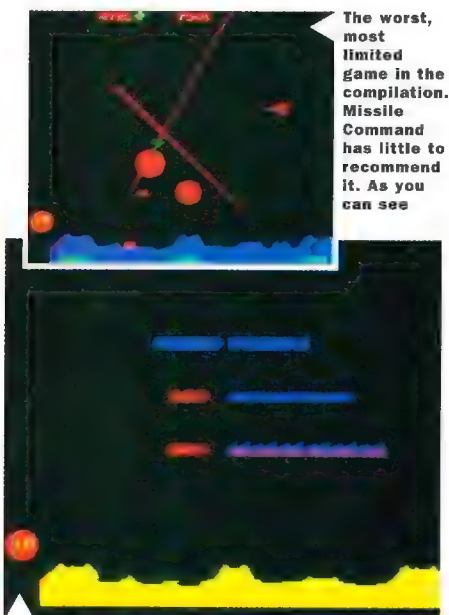
A bit like Space Invaders without the side-to-side movement and excitement, Missile Command pits you against an overwhelming air raid. Rather than having a 'ship' at the foot of the screen, you're put in control of four static gun emplacements. Each gun has a finite amount of ammunition, so you'll often think you've cracked it when suddenly one of your bases fails and you're left, like EastEnder Sanjay, firing blanks.

Fondly remembered by ex-Atari VCS fans, Missile Command is one of Atari's worst ever games as far as I'm concerned. Like Centipede, when it was in the arcade it had a track ball for control and without it, it loses any appeal it may have once had.

Old Toy Equivalent – Flight Deck

Top Of The Pops Equivalent – Don Estelle & Windsor Davies

Individual Score – 4

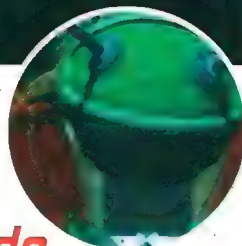


The worst, most limited game in the compilation. Missile Command has little to recommend it. As you can see

Your bonus total depends on how many of your bases are left intact at the end of the 'sheet'



To the left of the screen is the bouncing spider – shoot it down or it'll land on your head and kill you



Centipede

In last month's issue I said "My personal favourite... is Battlezone. Looking back, the reason I liked it so much in the arcades was probably entirely down to the shape of the unit in which it came". That was true, but if I was to rate the games on merit alone, my personal favourite would have to be Centipede.

Centipede, an altogether less ambitious shoot 'em-up – for its time, that is – re-appeared in the arcades about five years ago with a cash prize option. Readers of the March issue will also know that when on a 'dirty' weekend in Stratford with my wife-to-be I spent more time on the Centipede machine in the pub than in the guest house with my then girlfriend. Still, at least I won enough money to take her out for a curry that night.

Stuck at the bottom of the screen/garden, but with reasonable freedom of movement (i.e. up and down as well as left and right), it's a case of blasting away segments of a centipede that snakes down towards you. Shooting down bouncing spiders and moist snails adds to the final score and keeps you constantly on your toes. A shoot 'em-up Percy Thrower would have loved, Centipede scores highest.

Board Game Equivalent – Snakes and Ladders

Top Of The Pops Equivalent – Legs 11

Individual Score – 7

Battlezone

Because Battlezone doesn't come in its magnificent 'future tank' casing, it never quite scales the heights of excitement its arcade counterpart once did in the days of large 10 pence pieces and Star Bars. The game is stuck in a post-apocalyptic wire frame '3-D' environment and it's a case of searching out and destroying enemy tanks, spaceships and saucers.

The view perspective is 'in tank', with your target changing shape whenever a hostile vehicle is in range. Battlezone's main attraction is the difficulty level – it's tough to stay alive for more than 30 seconds at a time. Most of the tanks you'll face need to be destroyed with your first shot – a lot of the time you might not even get them in your sights quick enough to have a single pop. Each time you die – and you will, over and over again – your view screen cracks as an enemy shell tears into your tank.

Once in a while, a flying spaceship accompanied by a crackle that was last heard on the 1940's Flash Gordon series, hurtles down out of the sky at you. Timing your shot to perfection is crucial here; Battlezone came out long before autofire was invented.

Board Game Equivalent – Tank Command

Top Of The Pops Equivalent – Gary Numan

Individual Score – 6.5



The enemy tank's in your sight. Fire now or else it'll turn and blast you away



Visually the most impressive game in the compilation, *Tempest* is about as addictive as *All Bran*. Not my bowl of retro cereal at all

Tempest

Tempest, created in 1981, was an awesome arcade game that transported the player into abstract realms of space. When you play it now, it's more like being washed down the toilet. Dave Theurer, who designed the original *Tempest* and wrote the software and features on the compilation, said his original intention was to make a first-person perspective version of *Space Invaders*, but he ended up doing something completely new and different. Apparently, he had a dream about aliens coming from the centre of the Earth and took it from there.

He remembers, "It was just so exciting working on these new games. All my life I loved explosions. When I went to college I was a chemistry major because I wanted to do something where I could make explosions. When I was a kid I had a chemistry set and I'd blow stuff up all the time". It's a shame you can't blow up *Tempest* itself and replace it with an altogether better game to improve the compilation.

Old Toy Equivalent – The spinning top
Top Of The Pops Equivalent – *Dead Or Alive*
Individual Score – 5

Breakout

Visually by far the worst title of the six on offer. It makes up for its 'bulldog chewing a wasp' looks slightly, with decent, old fashioned gameplay the gameplay police would approve of wholeheartedly. Guiding a rectangle across the foot of the screen, you need to deflect a bouncing square dot upwards and against a wall that gradually disintegrates the more you hit it.

The two player option tickled Steve and myself as it's possible to manipulate your opponent's 'bat' with hilarious results, but cheating aside it's still fairly addictive even if it's as simple and as old fashioned as a Beatles jacket.

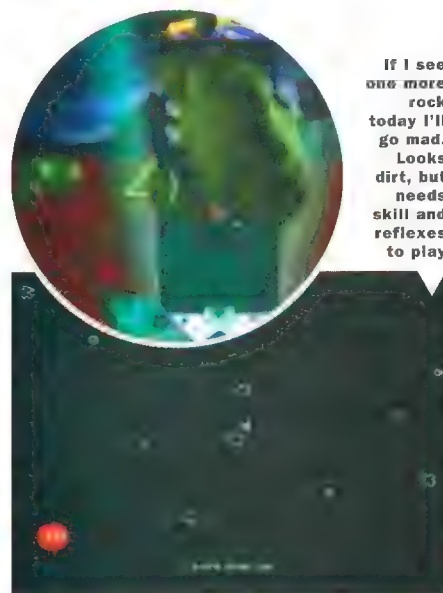
Old Toy Equivalent – *Skittles*
Top Of The Pops Equivalent – Colonel Abrahams
Individual Score – 5

Asteroids

Probably requiring more skill and better reflexes than any of the other five titles, *Asteroids* is only slightly visually better than *Breakout*. Stuck in a tiny, see-through spaceship that looks like a dunce's hat with tons of transparent floating rocks around you, you've basically got to shoot everything that moves.

The d-pad serves as your ship's navigator, incorporating the all-important thrust button, with two of the four symbol buttons being your fire and hyperspace buttons. If you're less than 21, the hyperspace button is to be used in dire emergencies only. Hitting this sends your craft into another, random, area of the screen and if there are no rocks there you survive. However, the more crowded the screen you left, the more chance you have of colliding with a rock when you 're-enter' from hyperspace – and dying instantly.

Prison equivalent – Smashing rocks
Top Of The Pops Equivalent –
Theme from Rocky
Individual Score – 6



If I see
one more
rock
today I'll
go mad.
Looks
dirt, but
needs
skill and
reflexes
to play

Next generation graphics they aren't, but for such a simple game *Breakout*'s well enjoyable



PRO SCORE

GAME Atari Arcade's Greatest Hits
GENRE Compilation
SOFTWARE HOUSE GT Interactive
CONTACT 0171 258 3791
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £39.99

Atari Arcade's Greatest Hits is a compilation of six arcade 'classics' from yesteryear sellotaped together with new-fangled intro sequences and interview footage of the original Atari developers. The games featured are exact simulations – emulations in fact – of their arcade counterparts from 16 years ago, so it wouldn't be right to give this compilation a really high score as, obviously, video games have come on a great deal over the years. The flip side of the coin however, states that any PlayStation game that's released for less than full price and contains six pieces of half-decent gaming history can't be all that bad. Although the six games haven't exactly stood the test of time, they're still okay in small doses

GRAPHICS 5

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 6

6

DAN Unlike the Namco's reanimated game corpses, at least these six games are legitimate classics. However, forty smackers is still way too expensive for games this shallow and repetitive. Why bother?

JAY The old boys will love it, but I can't see many 'young uns' paying top whack for a bag of ancient arcade monsters. As ever, it's a nice idea but the attraction is short-lived once you've got over the nostalgia

STEVE In my days on Amiga Action you could get perfect copies of each and every one of these for £1.50 each, so by my reckoning this makes the whole package worth about a tenner. At the most

ANDY Retro games are all well and good but eventually you realise how far games have come since. Why play *Asteroids* endlessly when you could spend time playing many of today's classic releases?

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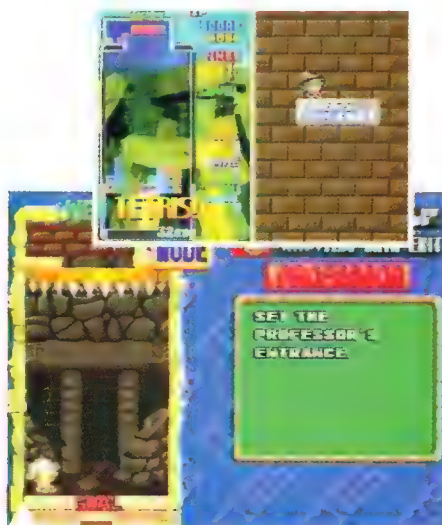
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Tetris Plus

The Game Boy's seminal title is now available, on import anyway, on the PlayStation. And it's actually not all that bad



In edit mode, you can choose where to put the prof's entrance and where to place the tiles

One way of winning is to create a hole at the foot of the screen for the prof to fall through onto the treasure

Does this plot line sound like some sort of exciting arcade adventure or what? A curious little professor and his lovely assistant are in search of fortune and adventure. A little older, but not much wiser, the supposedly intellectual misadventurer quickly gets into a heap of trouble.

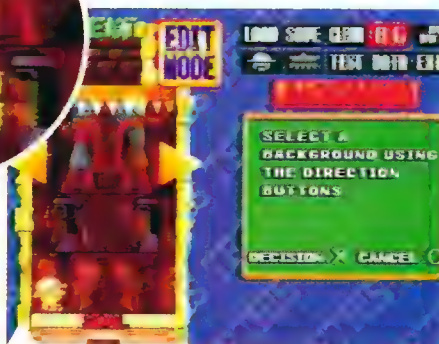
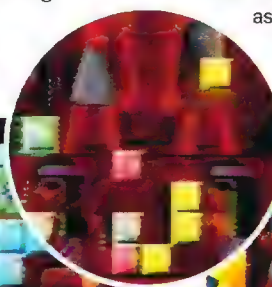
Anxious to impress his loyal assistant, the prof gets trapped inside the chamber of an ancient ruin. As the chamber fills with blocks tumbling from above, a viciously spiked ceiling ominously descends upon the brave yet foolish hero. Is this the sequel to Tomb Raider? Read on... When the blocks pile up, the prof tries to climb his way to the top. Ah. Blocks. Go on...

The chamber is already filled with patterns of blocks, so a path must be cleared for the prof to find the treasure. The prof's quest takes him across the globe and into the wonders of the labyrinth at Knossos, the pyramids of Egypt, Angkor Wat (experienced gamers will remember this location from the delightful Pang series), the Mayan ruins and a mysterious city with an additional 20 stages of death-defying puzzle excitement.

That's a total of 100 puzzles – each one more difficult than the last. However much you hype up this game, though, it's still Tetris. You know, that simplistic Game Boy game from over six years ago?

When Jaleco's Brian Marks told me a version of Tetris was coming out on the PlayStation, I couldn't help but snigger. After all, it's a Game Boy game innit? Well, yes and no. There's a limit to what you can do with a brick-based puzzle game without ruining the essence and gameplay of the original and Jaleco seems to have managed to do just that. For a start, it has avoided attempting some ridiculous 3-D version which would have the genius behind Tetris, Alexei Pazhitnov, pulling his beard out in frustration.

Four modes of play are included in Tetris Plus – classic Tetris (including two-player non-competitive play for the more chilled among us), puzzle mode, two player Vs puzzle mode and edit mode. Classic Tetris is exactly the same as the hallowed Game Boy version as devised by Spectrum Holobyte's aforementioned Alexei Pazhitnov, except in glorious 32-bit Technicolor.



The backgrounds range from ancient Egyptian to ancient Greek. All old then, are they?



The quicker you liberate the prof in puzzle mode, the more points you'll accrue



Choose an exotic location, then dive head first into the fray

Before play starts, you're told exactly what to do

Complete a stage quickly and you may create a new record

Single player classic Tetris only takes up half the screen, so it's possible to have two players playing on the same telly/monitor concurrently without actually battling against each other – the first game to feature a non-competitive split screen mode. Having said that, when I play Steve in Vs mode, I always win so easily you'd think it was a non-competitive game. It's in puzzle mode, however, that the action really starts. Any enthusiast of Tetris will have doubtless played the classic version until blue in the face, so the puzzle option comes as a welcome alternative.

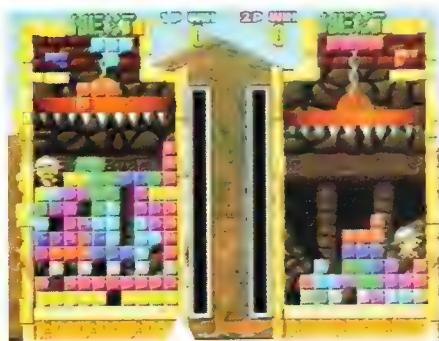
Instead of being faced with a blank slate, there are already some blocks at the foot of the screen, tantalisingly arranged so that the correct positioning of further blocks will make them disappear. On top of the blocks is an animated explorer who needs to be liberated by clearing a hole wide enough for him to fall into the treasure hidden beneath the play area.

At the top of the screen is a vicious spiked ceiling which will crush the intrepid idiot if your blocks go too high. Additionally, the safari tittered sucker will inexplicably climb up your

block formation the higher it gets, so time is at a massive premium. The quicker you finish the puzzle, the better chance you have of creating a new record time which, as is the edit mode, memory card-saveable so you don't have to play through the initial few easier levels in order to have a crack at the altogether more taxing later ones.

The best mode of all, however, is the Vs option within the puzzle mode which basically takes the two Game Boy link-up option one step further and you don't need two PlayStations to do it. Every line you make disappear on your side is added to your opponent's wall, thus forcing next door's explorer upwards, towards an horrific death.

Finally, edit mode lets you mess about with blocks, much as you did in your childhood, except this time there are no circular holes. Not only can you arrange blocks all over the play area to give yourself the Tetris challenge of a lifetime, you can determine what colour each one is and choose a background of your liking. These vary from Egyptian imagery to ancient Greek – so there's something for every wannabe explorer.



Player two is well in control here as player one's prof struggles to avoid being spiked at the top of the screen



There they are, the different modes of play, taking Tetris to the nth degree and beyond

PRO SCORE

GAME Tetris Plus

GENRE Compilation

SOFTWARE HOUSE Jaleco

CONTACT 0181 838 4600

RELEASE DATE Out in US & Japan

PRICE £import

I'm glad I gave Tetris Plus a fair go as I had visions of it getting the lowest mark ever awarded in PlayStation Pro. The addition of the hapless professor climbing all over the place who appears in every mode apart from classic Tetris enhances the gameplay in a way I found pleasantly surprising. Puzzle mode, which isn't strictly speaking a puzzle, is enjoyable and something that offers die-hard Tetris fans a brand new challenge that should last a good few hours. At the time of writing, Jaleco is in negotiations to find a British software house that'll publish it over here at a budget price. I hope talks prove successful as it would be a worthwhile purchase if it was to retail over here for under £40.

GRAPHICS 5

SOUND 5

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 7

6

DAN Why? Why, you crazy Japanese, are you doing this? Yes, it's as addictive as it's always been, but the thought of paying anything more than say, ooh, a fiver for this leaves a nasty aftertaste

JAY No fighting, racing or 'Big Al' or 'Big Les' in this, so I can't possibly recommend it to anybody. It reminds me too much of the time I lost at SNES Tetris Battle Gaiden at the end of a rather heavy night out

ANDY I used to enjoy Tetris years ago and although people attempt to take it a step further from time to time they usually fail. Miserably. And guess what? This is no exception although it's better than some

STEVE Dan's took advantage of me being stuck on the end here and nicked my comment, so I'll have to agree with everything he said I'm afraid, apart from his pseudo-xenophobic opening statement

Rebel Assault 2

The Hidden Empire

LucasArts urges you to feel the force once more as its second Star Wars-licensed PC conversion joins in on the movie's 20th anniversary celebrations

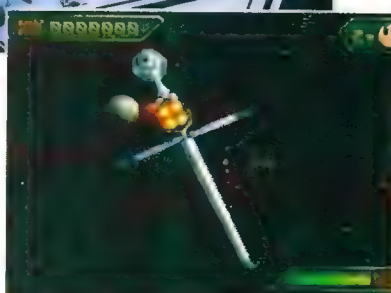
A long time ago in a galaxy blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Star Wars, as you know, is massive. Again. Twenty years on from their original release, the classic movies have been touched-up, remastered and had new bits put in. And according to the likes of Barry Norman, they're breaking box office records all over the globe as we speak. The whole Jedi Knight phenomenon is making a massive impact on popular culture once again and, as you'd expect, a huge sprawling line-up of merchandise has hit the high street shelves to tempt the hype fuelled punters into parting with their hard earned cash.

Even the video gaming world has been infiltrated by the Imperialistic merchandise machine, and now the PlayStation sees yet another official interactive Star Wars adventure converted from its successful PC origins to tag along with the recently released and mighty impressive, Dark Forces. Doom with Stormtroopers was fun, but this latest Star Wars treat from LucasArts offers gamers an entirely different slice of sci-fi pie.



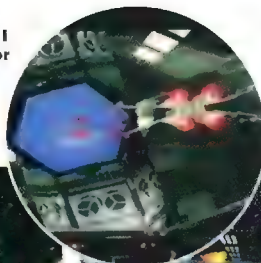
The Stormtroopers will appear at regular intervals, so it's best to put your target in place first and then fire at will

Blast away at the never ending stream of nasty TIE Fighters from the safety of your cockpit





"Admiral, you have failed me yet again. I specifically asked for this much lemonade in my lager splash. And I see you've forgotten my Scampi Fries too"



Everything was going smoothly until Red Five decided to wear his headphones upside down



For starters, the action is heavily FMV based, resulting in a hefty double CD format. All new specially shot Star Wars footage was done for inclusion in the game and pads the stints of actual gameplay out nicely, giving gamers the feel they're actually starring in their own little intergalactic adventure.

To complement the awesome visuals, LucasArts has included sound effects straight from Skywalker Sound and pinched a lot of it from the original cinematic recordings. And just like the movies, the overall aim of Rebel Assault 2 is to immerse the gamer in this alternative world, for them to live out fantasies of crushing the Empire and of being a well 'ard Jedi geezer with attitude – and surprisingly, it works.

The game starts as a movie, you then get to do a bit and then you sit back and watch another piece of film. And so it continues. Gamers may initially be put off by this somewhat slow-paced format, but anyone who has played the PC original with know that the constant breaks from gameplay don't upset the flow enough for you to get bored.

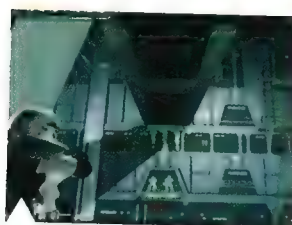
The story unfolds before you and in a round about way you suss out what you've got to do. Each chapter of the story sees you experiencing varying gaming styles – another way to relieve the boredom – with first-person-perspective blasting, flying the Millennium Falcon and X Wing target practise among the options.

Each different section of the game therefore requires quick thinking and even quicker responses if you want to get to the end in one piece. Mastering alien craft while whizzing through an asteroid field can be quite hairy, but you'll find that just a few attempts will see you through most of the game, with the continue option and passwords hurrying on the process.

I started off on the medium difficulty setting and, whilst I was enjoying myself immensely, I sailed through the first disc with relative ease. The second half of the adventure was admittedly tougher, but completion of the game came a tad too soon for my liking – even the hard setting wasn't too challenging. Not to mention the fact that the final slice of FMV was, as far as game completion sequences go, quite pants.



Follow the X Wing in front and make sure you shoot everything that gets in your way as you do so



Shoot the lights and the bridge will fall, allowing you to cross



Guide your target through the obstacles to avoid instant death



"Dance, dance, a Jedi you may be. But I am the Lord Of The Sith" said he

Enough the game features lots of brand new specially created FMV sequences (the first new stuff to be filmed since *Rebels Of The Jedi*, fact fans! we resisted doing a "Don't look at the new enhanced version" school like every other magazine on the planet, instead we decided to give you all the background details you'll also need on the four main characters, you'll remember whilst playing *Rebel Assault 2*. Aren't we nice, eh?



ROOKIE ONE

Originally a young cadet from the planet of Tatooine, Rookie One ended up in the *Atlaten* after he lost his entire family in a freak farm-machinery accident. Nightmares of severed limbs aside, he quickly became a skilled and enthusiastic pilot and was welcomed into the *Atlaten* soon afterwards. He gained much experience during his mission in the Battle of Yavin, but is still relatively inexperienced in the way of the Force, and therefore unprepared at the art of Jedi agility-poking.



ADMIRAL SARN

This guy's a somewhat *Admiral* in the Imperial forces who reports directly to the mighty Lord Vader. During his time with the Empire he has spearheaded a special-weapon research in a desperate, yet treacherous, ladder-climbing, bomb-busting bid of winning favour with the big boss, The Emperor. Admiral Sarn is an ambitious and somewhat fallen, but takes great care not to accept his death, mostly due to the fact that he has witnessed his mysterious and deadly mind powers just once too often.



NU MURLEEN

She is a talented, witty pilot who is not only a *Rebel*, whose life revolves solely around firing space shots and being part of the oh-so-grass *Rebel* gang. She's quick, intelligent and only occasionally sarcastic, but her fighting talents have made her one of the more valued members of the *Atlaten*. She met Rookie One just prior to the Battle of Yavin and has been friends with him ever since, but he reckons that a spot of secret love between the pair is surely in the offing before the credits roll.



DARTH VADER

Originally a talented marine named Anakin Skywalker, in a moment of nothing more than going down to the Cantina Bar with Ben Kenobi and impressing the ladies with their Jedi mind tricks, this young hopeful suddenly took to the dark side and became a faithful servant of the Emperor. Along the way he changed his name to Darth Vader, Lord of Sith and now spends most of his time wiping out *Rebel* bases, hurting his blimey and strapping people without even touching them.

Tales From The Dark Side

The story opens in true Star Wars tradition with the booming John Williams fanfare and before we know it we're inside a cockpit somewhere in the vicinity of the Dreighton Nebula. Here we join a certain novice pilot, Rookie One, and his mate who are enjoying a mid-afternoon jaunt as part of a Rebel scouting patrol.

They're investigating the disappearance of Rebel spacecraft near Dreighton (a region famous for its mythological tales about vanishing spacecraft), when suddenly they find themselves responding to a distress call coming from a ship deep inside the Nebula, informing them that the Empire is up to no good yet again.

The aforementioned distressed ship instantly explodes, due to Imperialistic interference, and it soon becomes clear that the recent disappearance of craft in the area must be down to the Empire.

Rookie One and his buddy do a quick bout of head scratching and decide that the Empire must be building some kind of new space weapon from inside the Nebula, and the odds are therefore high that they're probably hatching a devious Imperial plot against the Rebel Alliance too.

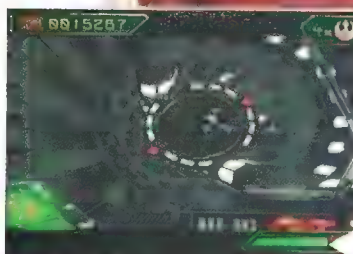
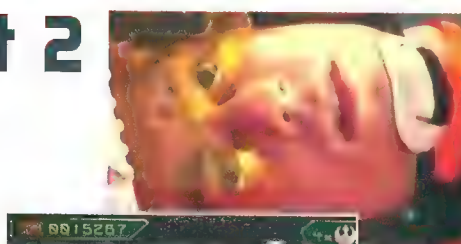
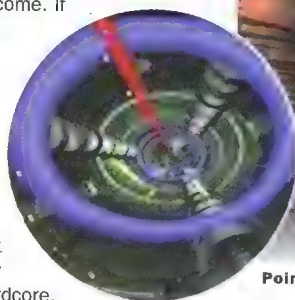
Seconds later, the pair find themselves pulling on the short straw of fate as a horde of TIE Fighters enter the fray and begin their attack. Buckle up, it's time to kick Imperialistic ass...



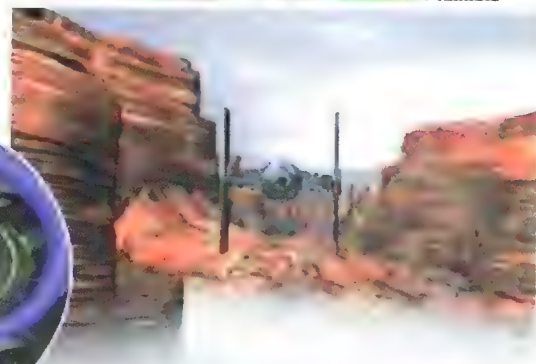
Rebel Assault 2

► I had fun, I'm not denying that, but this game should have been either much, much harder, much, much longer or much, much harder and much, much longer. In truth, it was like sitting down to watch a new Star Wars made-for-TV movie, one that I'd never seen before. I enjoyed the on-screen performances and I loved getting involved even more, especially when things got a bit hot for the Rebels and those cheeky Stormtroopers needed a quick slap. But from a punter's point of view, it's bit short-lived to warrant a price tag over, say £25.

Star Wars fanatics will cream over this and they'll probably play it again and again and again until their eyes bleed. But those of you out there who have a fond love for the Force but don't really go overboard on it probably won't see the attraction as much. I just hope this review informs you enough to make a purchase decision, whatever the outcome. If you know what to expect from it, then buying a copy of this (admittedly entertaining) game won't come as a disappointment. But Rebel Assault 2 is unfortunately strictly for the hardcore.



Several of the game's 'chapters' involve you navigating your way through a series of bottomless tunnels



Pointless Mission Number One is a 'practice session' in a stolen TIE Fighter. Looks nice enough though

PRO SCORE

GAME Rebel Assault 2

GENRE Shoot 'Em Up

SOFTWARE HOUSE LucasArts

CONTACT 0171 368 2000

RELEASE DATE April

PRICE £44.99

Nice. Very nice indeed, but the stunning visuals and stereophonic Skywalker Surround Sound don't make up for the fact that this excellent Star Wars romp is over all too soon. A harder difficulty setting and perhaps another CDs worth of adventuring would have made this absolutely brilliant but, as it stands, I can only see Rebel Assault 2 making its way into the game collections of the horde of Jedi junkies out there who still fantasise about being Princess Leia's pants. Its release may seem like it's jumping on the current Star Wars bandwagon, but let's face it, the final result could have been much, much worse. They could have done an Ewok platform game for example. Count yourselves lucky.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 6

LASTABILITY 4

7 1/2

DAN It does indeed look and move like a dream, but it's too repetitive, too easy and hideously brief. If a couple of hours fun justifies a full price purchase in your mind, then you'll enjoy this. You crazy tart

STEVE I actually quite like this, and because I'll never play it again the lack of a long term challenge isn't much of a problem. Looks superb and what there is of it plays at a more than acceptable standard

ALEX Lovingly compiled and pretty varied, it's slightly too short-lived to warrant anything higher than Jay's given it. The Stormtroopers are every bit as stupid as they are in the movies too. Which is nice

ANDY Looks outstanding and while you do get the feeling of taking part in the struggle against the Empire, it's far too simple. The missions aren't too varied and if it's a long lasting challenge you're after, look elsewhere

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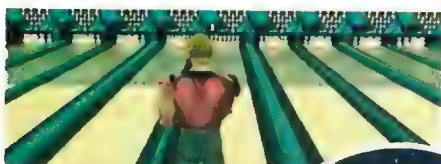
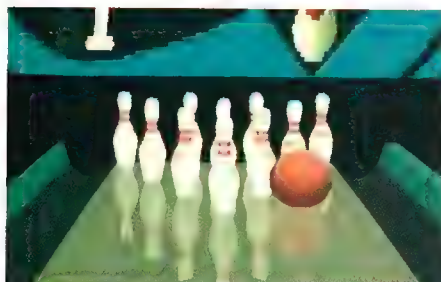
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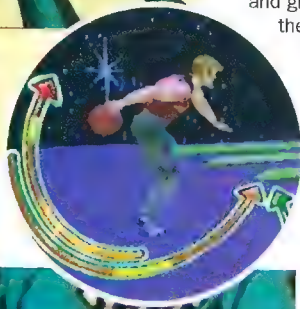


Ten Pin Alley

To date nobody has ever produced a stunning version of a bowling game. Probably because nobody has ever really expressed any interest in bowling, bar Fred Flintstone and Homer Simpson



Line the player up with the marker and away you go. Don't forget to adjust the spin accordingly



Ten pin bowling is one of those 'sports' best experienced when under the influence. You know the score, a couple of beers and a few games. Initially you will play average bowls which will eventually deteriorate into a farce when the bowl trundles pitifully into the gutters.

The same could be said for Electronic Arts' latest venture which, while unique in that nobody has brought you this before, could easily be ignored. This is because it has got some terrible flaws which hinder any scrap of enjoyment you may have gleaned.

It's best not to get involved in a match with a computer opponent straight away as you're almost guaranteed to lose every single match. The thing is, these players are the best players you're ever likely to come across. These guys and girls aren't your usual occasional visitors to the alley, they live for the place.

Obviously they do vary in strength and accuracy but even the lesser players will give you a match you're likely never to forget. Thankfully, before you begin a

match you can create your own player. Here you must decide whether you are to be left or right handed, your creed, sex and most importantly, which colour strides to step out in. Once you've found a player you can handle and have sussed out his or her strengths and weaknesses, it's possible to save them so you don't have to attempt to build the same player every time.

Once a game begins you must quickly adapt to the situation and use all the options to your advantage. You must quickly learn how to spin the ball in both directions to gain the desired effect – either a strike or a spare. And that's about it, apart from knowing where to stand and position your player before taking a shot.

Another important aspect is the speed at which you throw the ball down the lane. If you have a few practice games on your own beforehand, these moves will come much easier. Don't think you can defeat any computer players without too much effort though.

The game really shouldn't be played against the computer, it's far more rewarding when you challenge other human players. The reason for

Born to bowl

"Flo" LEFT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Dean" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Dot" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN
"Jill" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Dexter" LEFT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Dutch" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN
"Candi" LEFT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Morgan" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Edie" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN
"Chip" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Olaf" LEFT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN	"Chuck" RIGHT HANDED POWER ACCURACY SPIN



The history of bowling is well interesting. Yes it is. just watch the movie to see why

this is simple; the computer will always raise its game to unseen peaks and defeat your finest efforts.

For all this however, the main problem with Ten Pin is its playability. What works one time isn't guaranteed to work the next. And this is why any player will soon tire after just a few games.

Controlling the ball isn't simple, it's as tricky as they come and only the slightest error in any aspect will result in potential failure. This is why you will get sick of it very quickly indeed. You must gauge both the speed of the bowl and the spin you will put on it as well as the angle at which you will throw. It's all done using the power bars which wouldn't be out of place on a PGA game, one for power and then one for spin.

The basic idea has been thought out well but the execution leaves more than a little to be desired.

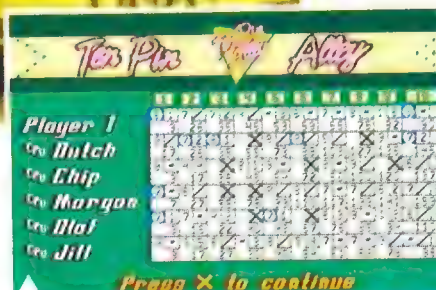
You are given three different alleys you may play on with varying music from rock to lounge music. Either way the repetitive tunes still become tiresome, almost as quickly as the game itself in fact.

You may have a maximum of six players taking part at one time and you don't need more than one control since players take their goes alternatively – one of the scarce good points about Ten Pin Bowling.

Scoring games can be decided between a standard scoring and having a no tap game which doesn't seem to be a great deal different from the standard game to be honest. And that's about all there is to Ten Pin Alley. Plenty to do but most people simply won't be bothered due to the lack of variation (although what else is there to bowling?) and slack gameplay.

There are a few sequences of celebrations for the players after achieving a spare or gaining a strike. The only other sequences are for terrible bowls where you fail to get the bowl down the alley. These too become tiresome after a couple of games.

Perhaps the one redeeming feature other than the number of players you can have in a single game is the 'abuse' option whereby you hold each of the shoulder buttons down and a cry of "loser" or "you suck" will be heard. This can put a human player off sufficiently in mid bowl but a computer player won't bat an eyelid. If this is the best it can do, it's not worth a recommendation in my books.



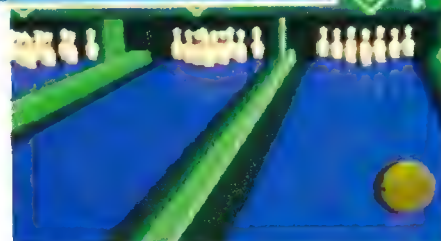
As you can see the computer players are far superior – even on an off day



This power bar may look confusing but you'll soon get the hang of it



One of the three bowling alleys in all its glory. Tasteful in every way



One of the computer opponents lines up his first bowl. No doubt he'll clear the lot. The git

PRO SCORE

GAME Ten Pin Alley

GENRE Sports

SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts

CONTACT 01753 549442

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

Bowling is always going to lack any kind of longevity for anybody due to its very nature, but Ten Pin Alley does itself no favours. If it was instantly playable you may be able to glean the slightest hint of enjoyment from it. As it stands however, it will take hours of play before you can make a semi-respectable score in the hundreds. No matter how you play, a computer opponent will always step up a gear and leave you in the distance. The overall feeling I had was that people just won't be that interested in learning the ins and outs of the spin and power combinations as the margin for error is non-existent. Maybe somebody will come up with a bowling game which is thoroughly enjoyable some day. But I doubt it

GRAPHICS 5

SOUND 4

GAMEPLAY 5

LASTABILITY 4

4 1/2

DAN Were it not for the fact that the controls are hideous and it's based on the blandest game in the history of the world, this might be bearable. In fact, it's a load of old balls, in both senses of the word

JAY Curiosity attracted me to this quirky offering, but after a few attempts I soon became bored, frustrated and annoyed with the whole idea of it. Dodgy controls and the lack of gaming 'rewards' don't help either

ALEX Four and a half's, if anything, too high a mark for this release that would have been shunned had it been an Atari ST shareware product. Give me Slamscape any day (regular readers will know what I mean)

STEVE It's one of my goals to go through life and never go bowling. As a result then, Ten Pin Alley didn't exactly peak my interest and I've spent exactly the same amount of time playing this as I have the real thing

Little Big Adventure

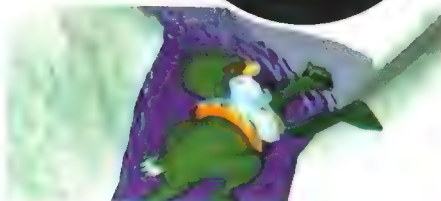
Question: What happens if you cross a three year old PC game with a state of the art super-console? Answer: You get disappointed



Sneaking around is essential. Learn to be discreet and you'll go far!



The levels are nicely varied but you're going to have to work really hard to see the later ones



Little Big Adventure was an undisputed phenomenon when it appeared on the PC, and Electronic Arts probably has every right to expect a repeat performance from the PlayStation version. They may well get it but, in my opinion, it certainly won't be as richly deserved as it was originally.

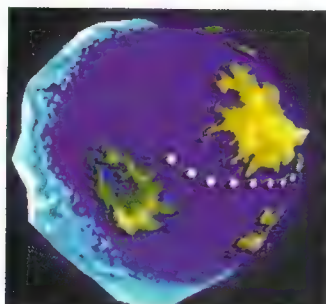
First time around this really pushed the machine it was played on just about as far as it had ever been pushed (admittedly the PC back then had only a fraction of the power it possesses today). That was some three years ago, long before the PlayStation had graced the shelves and, considering that the console is far more powerful than its PC equivalent of the time, it surely wouldn't be unreasonable to expect at least some improvements.

However, apart from the option to save the game at any point (as opposed to the incredibly annoying fixed point system used previously) and some minor improvements to the number of colours in some areas (although if I hadn't been told about them I doubt I'd have ever noticed) it's 'as you were' the first time around.

Is isn't necessarily all that bad. Anyone who's played it will already know it's still a great adventure game. For those who haven't, Little Big Adventure takes the player on a strange and mysterious journey through a surreal and dangerous world. Taking the role of Twinsen, a young Quetch called in a dream by the Goddess Sendell to come to your planet's rescue, it is your destiny to restore peace and harmony to the world.

You begin the quest imprisoned in an asylum

No matter how many Gallic adventure games I play, I don't think I'll ever understand the way a French mind works!



So you found a hair dryer? Great! I'll be with you in a minute, just let me install the rheostat.

(which obviously hinders you reaching your goal somewhat), and from the start it is difficult to know just who you can trust or where you are supposed to go. The manual gives little away and it's only by escaping from your incarceration and exploring will the story begin to unfold.

What you do know is that the tyrant Dr. Funrock has taken over your home planet of Twinsun and imposed his brutal methods of control over the entire population. His primary weapons are his ability to clone different species and teleport these clones anywhere on the planet should trouble arise. There is a common factor though, all species suffer under his reign of terror (even his own 'Groboclones') but only a few are capable of resistance.

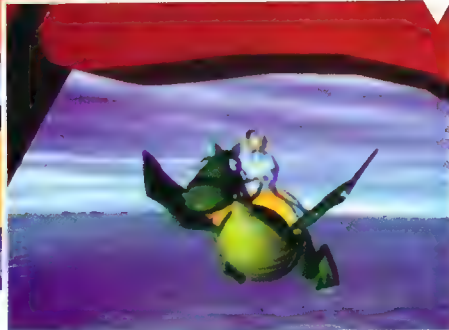
To succeed in defeating him you must find those few who can help, sometimes having to travel great distances to do so. Only then will you come anywhere close enough to having the power and knowledge required to save the world and stop Funrock.

One of the first things you'll need to learn is when and where are the best times to use each of Twinsen's behaviour modes. There are four different ones to choose from and each suits a particular situation better than the others. The mode you'll use more than most is probably Normal mode, used for general exploration and interaction with the other characters you'll find knocking around the place. In addition you have Athletic, which allows you to get from one place to another much more quickly by running, Discreet which lets you sneak about the place stealthily and undetected and Aggressive which



The rendered intro sequence is nice but is all too short if you ask me

The whole game has a distinctly 3-D feel to it, not just the introduction sequence



gives you a number of basic beat 'em-up style moves for fighting an enemy, should the worst come to the worst.

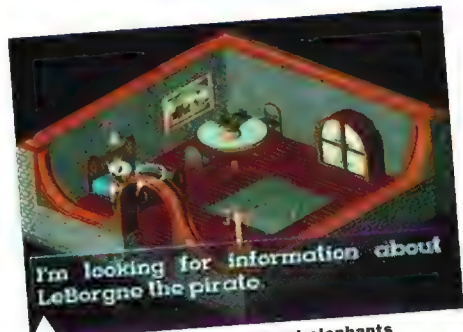
All of these give you a good level of control over Twinsen and the clever use of the four shoulder buttons to switch between the modes quickly proves a surprisingly intuitive control method. I have to say however that, for me, all this is spoiled by an unappealing storyline and game setting. I had the same problem with the PC version in that while there is plenty to be positive about in terms of gameplay there was no hook, no aspect of the storyline or characterisation to draw the player in and spur them on to continue playing. And unfortunately, given the nature of this type of game the story, characters and puzzles are the most important elements.

With a little more depth, a little less fighting and a few more decent logical problems thrown in for good measure, LBA could have been stunning instead of a badly missed opportunity. Enough time has passed now since the original release to have completely overhauled the game for its PlayStation release but this hasn't happened.

You get the feeling that when LBA was designed it was supposed to shout 'look what we can get this machine to do' rather than 'look what a good game we can program', which was all well and good then. It's just a shame that no one realised we've all become used to things far better than this and frankly, this stopped being impressive a good two years ago.

Twinsun is a relatively new planet on the outskirts of a remote galaxy. Its rotational plane has stabilised between two suns. There is a huge mountain range running along its equator, that divides the planet in half, each hemisphere is warmed by a single sun. The Northern Hemisphere, with its orange sky is warmer than the Southern Hemisphere. Except for a

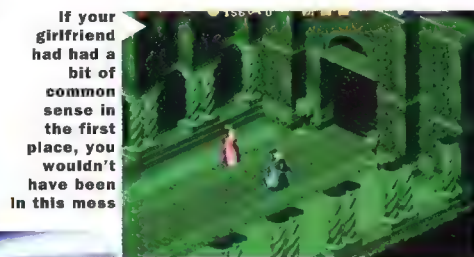
There's no denying that the LBA game world is massive, and seeing all of it will take a long time



If you enjoy talking to rats and elephants then LBA is definitely the game for you!



Disaster strikes, but then again it seems to around just about every corner



PRO SCORE

GAME Little Big Adventure

GENRE Adventure

SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts

CONTACT 01753 549442

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

A decent enough adventure, let down only by the fact that it's very dated. As someone who's familiar with the PC version, I was expecting the game to have come on over the years and must admit to being more than a little disappointed that it's essentially nothing more than a straight conversion of an ageing classic. There's something in there for fans of the quirky style of adventure that only the French can create, and it does successfully merge two different game genres together to a certain extent (beat 'em-up and adventure, although admittedly in a simplistic way), but for me I'm afraid, it's a case of been there, done that, worn out the free T-shirt. We should be looking forward not back.

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 8



DAN Yet another PC rehash trundles out of the stable, but by the time it gets there, everyone has packed up and gone home. It's a nice game, as far as it goes, but a let down that nothing new has been tried

JAY An entertaining enough adventure romp, but as mentioned above, we've seen it all before and this conversion is a little dated. Fans of the genre may want to take a look before they part with any money though

ALEX Initially awkward and frustrating to control, once you get to grips with the sprite's actions and attributes, it's not a bad game. Certainly big enough to offer value for money, LBA's a time consumer if nowt else

ANDY I've never understood the attraction with this type of game and as a result, LBA is something I won't be playing in the future. It looks fine, if a little unimpressive but tries to make up for it in quirky gameplay

Porsche Challenge

Sony tries to tempt us with the thrill of driving a £35,000 sports car without the hassle of breaking the window and hot-wiring the bugger. Oh, go on then...



Players get a close-up view of their selected driver before the race starts. Abuse and taunts flow freely



It has been a long time coming, but Sony has finally finished its official Porsche endorsed racer. About time too. The game showcases the German car wizard's new Boxster model and as well a gut busting feast of racing excitement, you also get a backstage tour of the Boxster's creation from pencil sketches right down to the finished article. Close consultation between both Sony's internal development and the sausage eating guys at Porsche have resulted in a gorgeous gourad-shaded texture-mapped Boxster, making the overall package even more tempting and pleasing to the eye.

The game is split into various sections, offering time trial based challenges, practice sessions, championship tournaments and a split-screen two player option – each one attempting to recreate the real life thrills of swanning around town at high speed in a fancy sports car with a load of friends in tow. Real-time lighting effects add to the realism, and the layout of most of the tracks on offer seems to shy away from the 'foot down avoid the corners' sensation of the current crop of arcade racers.

An arcade mode is supplied, but for true realism you really need to play the game in simulation mode if you want to reap the benefits. Manual and automatic gearboxes are selectable, with the inclusion of a handy tiptronic

transmission. This basically helps you out during the race by giving you a higher top speed and allowing you to recover a lot quicker from those irritating, yet unavoidable, crashes. As you can imagine, this is extremely helpful, especially when you're just starting out.

All the options are immediately accessible, but it's the championship mode where the longevity of the title lies. Once you've got to grips with the car's handling and managed to get yourself into first place on the easy, regular and evil difficulty modes, you'll progress onto what are known as the interactive levels and then onto the long interactive ones.

Here, the tracks get extended in a style similar to Ridge Racer's, but various obstacles around the course that lie dormant in the previous difficulty modes come to life and start hindering your driving. Barriers will close, non-racing cars will get in your way, short cuts will be revealed and a whole host of other kerb side oddities will try to stop you scooping first prize.

Six drivers are selectable straight from the off (with a special hidden Test Driver coming into play later on), and it'll come as no surprise to know that they're all driving variations on the Boxster. What does separate the drivers though is their attitudes behind the wheel. Depending on which one you pick, most of the remaining



Three racing viewpoints are on offer, this being the 'middle' option. A small map in the lefthand corner lets you know who's coming up behind too



Driving on the pavement slows you down, but when at top speed it is possible to make a short cut across without noticeable sluggishness

By pressing down on the D-pad you'll be treated to a rear end view of the race. This shows just how close your rivals really are

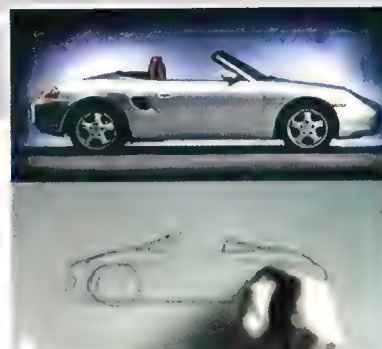


boy racers will try and cause you problems once the race starts. For example, select Dan Kent and he'll have no problems overtaking Nikita or Marco, but as soon as any of the others get near they'll attempt to knock him off the track and/or get in his way and slow you down.

Your driver can get his own back on these road hogs by tooting the car's horn, which may sound trivial at first and somewhat of a novelty, but it'll annoy the guy in front no end. Alternatively, it'll warn your 'friends' that you're trying to get through and they'll move out of the way for you.

The game also features a range of options to enhance your enjoyment as well as make the proceedings a little bit fairer for novices. An intelligent catch-up option gives the trailing cars a slight speed boost so they can indeed 'catch-up', plus the option's there for you to delay the start of the race for the drivers in first and second position should you wish to. This evens the odds a little bit and provides a 'sporting' element to the proceedings.

Playing in the two player mode is good fun, especially as you don't have to worry about the other drivers who hate your guts - it's just you and your mate head to head. The action doesn't suffer from the split-screen either and there's no noticeable slow down during play. Technical nit pickers will probably moan about bouts



Select the 'View Boxster' option and you'll get a historic behind-the-scenes FMV movie showing how Porsche went about creating the Boxster. Gasp at the pencil sketches and look on in awe as some git cruises around town, showing off his motor

Marco - the game's very own Italian Kevin Webster - takes time out from the race to have a chat with the local constabulary



Banked walls are commonplace around most of the tracks and come in handy when you over steer on the bends



Tracks Entertainment!



STUTTGART: A wide open track with several deceptive bends. Initially, you're only given four tracks to play with: The test track at Stuttgart, a Las Vegas-style inner city oval course, a midnight drive through the streets of Japan and finally a wintry Alpine extravaganza. Complete the Championship mode on the evil difficulty level and each



USA: Race around the inner city and avoid the trams of the track and then be extended and later on, they'll become 'interactive'. Objects around the course such as trams, barriers, other vehicles etc. will now cross your path to up the difficulty scale. The long interactive ones though, really separate the men from the boys.



JAPAN: Experience the thrill of driving your Boxster at night



ALPINE: An icy and slippery race through the countryside

Boxster Buddies

Each character has its own specific car paint job as well as different opinions on the other drivers in the game. As each race progresses they'll get aggressive towards their enemies and let their mates pass by without worry. So, to help you work out who to avoid, here's a rundown on the driver's likes and dislikes...



DAN KENT

BEATS - Likes
TAKA-BO - Dislikes
NIKITA - Neutral
MARGO - Likes
RACHEL - Loves



DJ BEATS

DAN - Likes
TAKA-BO - Likes
NIKITA - Neutral
MARGO - Dislikes
RACHEL - Loves



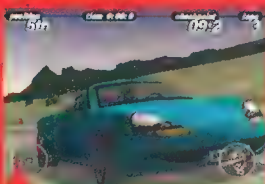
TAKA-BO

BEATS - Neutral
DAN - Likes
NIKITA - Likes
MARGO - Dislikes
RACHEL - Loves



NIKITA

BEATS - Loves
TAKA-BO - Loves
DAN - Likes
MARGO - Dislikes
RACHEL - Likes



MARGO

BEATS - Dislikes
TAKA-BO - Neutral
NIKITA - Likes
DAN - Dislikes
RACHEL - Likes



RACHEL

BEATS - Likes
TAKA-BO - Dislikes
NIKITA - Dislikes
MARGO - Neutral
DAN - Likes

Porsche Challenge

► of 'poor pop-up' as certain sections of the scenery fills itself abruptly, but to be honest, it doesn't spoil the game at all.

Three viewpoints are there for the picking, with the furthest exterior option being the wisest choice for beginners as it allows you to see corners and the like fairly well in advance – something you'll appreciate, as each track gives you little or no warning of the oncoming twists and turns in the road. Once you've got to know the tracks though, it's the interior camera angle that subconsciously provides you with a slightly speedier point of view.

Speed is again the key point in qualifying for the next track when playing in the championship mode. In each race you are given a rapidly decreasing time limit and the only way to stand a chance of romping home in first place is to hit the various checkpoints dotted around each course. Failure to do so loses you the race and you'll have to try again with the aid of the very few 'continues' that are provided.

It's a tricky affair getting through all the qualifying races in the entire game and will prove quite difficult for anyone who claims to be king of the road as far as video games go. As its title quite rightly suggests, it is indeed a challenge and I suppose that's the only real gripe I've got about the game. It looks beautiful, it's certainly fast enough once you've memorised the tracks and all you need to do to win is practice for a while.

It's by no means the best of the genre and there are a few small details that could have been tweaked – more opportunities to make use

of the hand brake, more opposition in the two player mode and the usual 'more tracks' whinge – but overall, Porsche Challenge is a nifty little mover. It mixes a true simulation (of sorts) with the thrill of a frantic arcade beast and once you've got to grips with the whole thing, it's very enjoyable and extremely playable. A highly recommended little gem.



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PRO SCORE

GAME Porsche Challenge

GENRE Racing

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony

CONTACT 0171 447 1600

RELEASE DATE May

PRICE £44.99

As predicted several issues ago, Sony's Porsche Challenge is one of the front runners in the race to become the best driving game on the PlayStation. Having said that, there are several others more than capable of giving it a run for its money. Rage Racer, reviewed this issue, is one such title. The Need For Speed 2 and Speedster (also reviewed this issue) are two more and once again it's all down to the age old dilemma of personal preference. So although I very much recommend Porsche Challenge and I'd certainly advise anyone in the market for a good driving game to try it out for themselves, I'd also advise them to test drive the others on offer before they part with any hard cash.

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 6

LASTABILITY 6

8½

DAN It's definitely to your advantage to test drive the new crop of driving games. As far as I'm concerned they're all pretty much identical. Porsche is certainly a nice looking title, but it's a bit bland and left me cold

STEVE I didn't think I'd be into this but I was surprised to find I actually enjoyed it a lot more than I thought it would. Looks nice enough and plays a fair bit better than the likes of Ridge Racer if you ask me

ALEX Very disappointing to be honest. The final review version still looks like the development code to me. The opposition drivers' AI is okay, but there are at least five better racing games around

ANDY It certainly looks the part, but I found the initial playability factor pretty tough to master. If you're after a nippy little driving game that takes patience and practise though, then this should suit you, sir

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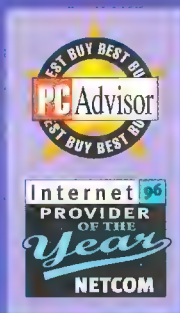


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Hexen

Sing hallelujah! It's another of those Doom games. We just don't get enough of these, so thank the Lord for this, the game that time forgot



 've been wracking my brains all morning now, trying to come up with a new and witty way of introducing yet another Doom clone. As you've probably guessed, I've failed miserably. I must have used up all my creative juices on Tenka. The best I can do for Hexen is this equation: (Doom - Guns) + Magic = Hexen. Yes, it's Doom with spells and cloaks rather than chain guns and cyber-armour. And boy, isn't that just a riveting proposition?

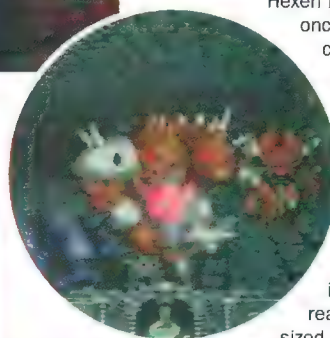
Well, it could be, were I writing this over two years ago. For that was when Hexen first exposed itself to PC owners in the park – a time

when the whole Doom idea was fresh and pant-wettingly exciting. However, this isn't then. It's now, and we're positively drowning under games of this breed.

So why release a fairly ancient PC conversion into such a crowded marketplace? Because

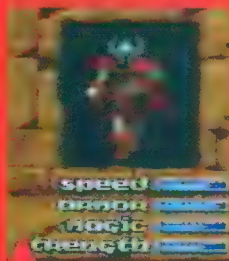
Hexen is one of the classics and, once beefed up for PlayStation consumption, it'll have the sheer balls to thunder to the top of the charts. Which would be fine, if that was indeed what had happened.

Needless to say that isn't what's happened, and if you hear a rustling noise, it's just me slipping into my leather one-piece suit ready to deliver an Olympic sized kicking to this shivering,



Hexually Transmitted Geezers

Yes, Mason's role and in the land of originality is the shame is also as one of these derivative types. It's not that original, as it has merely been copied from the 90 percent, but it's not the failure of the same quality of failure that is a little bit. Thus it ends up being no more the Thesaurus for new ways of saying words. Anyway, have they all...

**CLERIC**

Despite his name, you won't find this gem on Long's Bay Beach, the New York summer playground. The thrillingly confident Wayne Dobson, our ice-barterer, has nothing to do with the game, with a native islander's effort, which looks quite nice.

**FIGHTER**[illegible]**MAGE**

WAGE *Disincentive* says history man, most agree, but not, however, after a 1990-1991 experiment. The results showed he was not averse to a wage incentive.



And hello to you too, Mr. Evil Demon. I hope you realise that I'll be doing my best to scupper your wicked plan. Oh I will



This snake-eye hula hoop is one of the more tasty weapons...

...but it's still useless against a swarm of blocky monsters

Ding dong merrily on high to open a secret door

A burny flying thing is chucking hot rocks at me, but luckily my spiky stick will sort it out

A monster falls on its devilish arse, releasing a cloud of guff in the process

Oooh, look at those smooth graphics. Can't beat a year old PC conversion can you?

sickly runt that I'm reliably informed is a game. Come on, why don't y'all join me?

It's to Hexen's detriment that I'm reviewing it after playing Tenka. The awesome visuals of Psygnosis' effort just make Hexen's shortcomings all the more glaring. You see, Hexen is still seemingly using the same game engine that powered Final Doom all those years ago. Which, let's face it, is starting to show its age. It's slow, chunky and more than a little cumbersome.

The 'plot' involves some demon things called Serpent Riders causing mischief, which results in you having to sally forth to bang their demonic heads together. There's something called The Hub, and you've got to open the doors leading off from it to move on to new areas.

Essentially it's exactly the same game as Final Doom with changed graphics and a few tweaks. You can choose from three character types, for instance. You can fly and you can cast spells. And that's about it. To go into any more depth would be misleading, because no matter how many Fantasy badges you hang from its cuffs, Hexen is deathly dull and embarrassingly out of date.

The graphics, always the first thing to attract you to a game, look awful. Flat and predictable, they move at a speed that could generously be described as slug-like. You can hold down X to run, but rather than giving you an extra burst of speed, it merely means you move at the speed you should do normally. The enemies are uninspired, looking like monsters that didn't manage to make it to the original Doom auditions and their attacks so feeble it almost feels cruel to kill them. And now I'm struggling to think of anything else remotely interesting to say about this sorry affair. Sod it, that'll do. I'm

not prepared to waste any more time on this. Let's round it up.

It's rubbish, should you be in any doubt. It has been in development for ages, always tantalisingly promised 'next month', and never appearing. And now we know why. It doesn't even look as if any work has gone into it during that prolonged gestation period. And the ultimate irony is that it's taken so long to arrive that Activision will be unveiling the hot-off-the-presses sequel before the end of the year, thus rendering this one of the most cock-eyed bits of release scheduling ever. And coming in the same month as Exhumed, Epidemic and the aforementioned Tenka is just the icing on the cake.

Let me spell it out for you. WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE GAMES LIKE THIS. OK? Thanks. It's a tedious translation of an ancient PC game in a genre crying out for innovation. That just about sums it up. Pretend it's a woman with a clipboard on a Saturday shopping spree and avoid it like the plague.



Dare you step into the red mist of Ragoranoth? Or will you just go home and have a mug of Bovril? I know what I'd do...

PRO SCORE

GAME Hexen

GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up

SOFTWARE HOUSE GT Interactive

CONTACT 0171 258 3791

RELEASE DATE May

PRICE £44.95

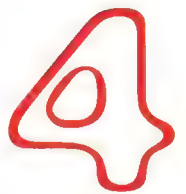
Oh dear. It's baffling, and more than a little insulting, that anyone expected you to fall for this. Two minutes play is enough to give you the shakes, anything more than that could result in vomiting. It's dire, makes no attempt to utilise the PlayStation's full potential and seems content to rise along on a wave of second hand publicity from the PC market. The question we always ask ourselves at the end of each review is "Would I be happy to pay full price for this?" In this case the answer is categorically no. I'd be livid. I'd want violent revenge on the people who wrote it, the people who sold it to me and any magazine that dared to recommend it in the first place. This is a mess and anyone who says otherwise is an evil liar.

GRAPHICS 5

SOUND 5

GAMEPLAY 4

LASTABILITY 3



STEVE I don't see how you can like one and not the others seeing as they're all the same. If anything I'd say Hexen is marginally better than most because it at least does have something of a structure. Miserable sods

JAY The monsters turn into Lego men up close, it's painfully slow and GT Interactive simply shouldn't have bothered releasing it. If you like the genre, then there are much better offerings than this currently available

ANDY The reason people enjoy most games of this sort is because they're fast, playable and downright addictive. Hexen is none of these, it's sluggish in the extreme and not enjoyable. Could have been spectacular

ALEX There's only one game called Hexen, one game called Hexen, we're walking along, singing a song, walking in a pixel wonderland. There's only one game called Hexen, one game called Hexen, we're walking along...

PRO COMPETITION

Board Stupid?



Question:

From the following list, which PSX game allows you to experience snowboarding from the comfort of your armchair? Is it...

2Xtreme?
Aquanaut's Holiday?
Crypt Killer?
Or Tomb Raider?

Answers on a postcard to
BOARD STOOPID
PlayStation Pro
IDG Media
Freepost (SK3038)
Macclesfield
SK10 4NP



Cool Boarders is a top little game, there's no denying that. And so to celebrate its massive success in the charts we've got together with Sony Computer Entertainment to give you lot a chance to get hold of some rad snowboard related gear – for free!

On offer we have four funky runners-up packages containing a copy of Cool Boarders, plus a copy of the PlayStation sponsored snow boarding video, featuring both the Day Tripper and Head movies (which are indeed both rather cool).

But the lucky beggar who scoops first prize will receive not only the aforementioned package, but he/she will gain access to the top customised Sony PlayStation snowboard you see before you which is worth... oooh, hundreds of pounds. Well, it's worth over four hundred quid, if the truth be known.

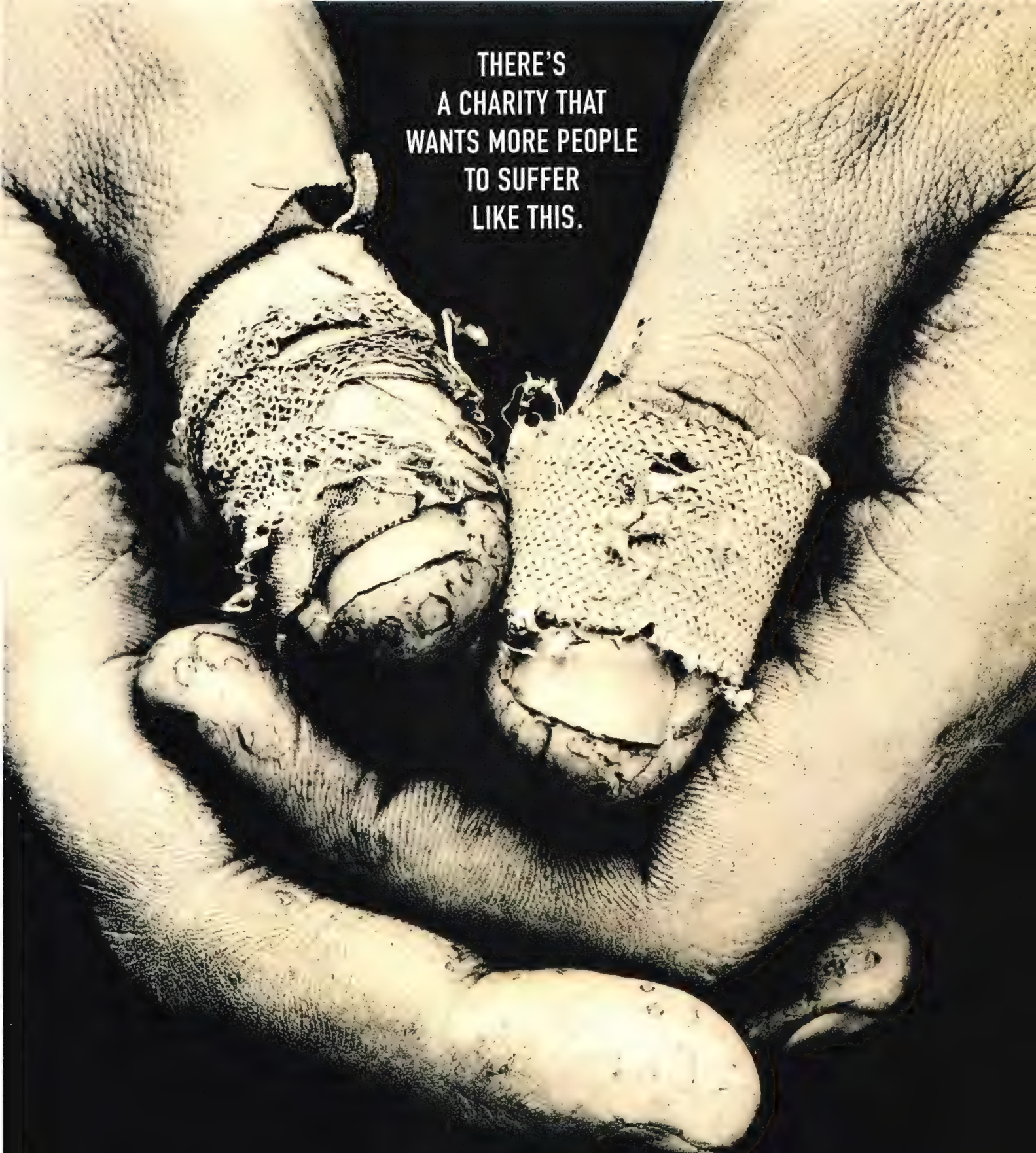
Sounds good, doesn't it? Yes indeed, and all you have to do to stand a chance of winning is answer the easy question and send off your entry, via a postcard, to the address opposite. Good luck dudes!



SONY

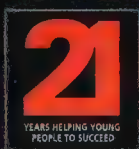


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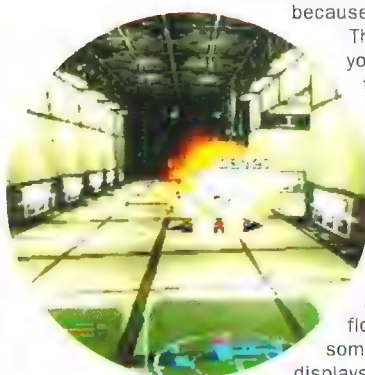
YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT SONY HAVE INFLECTED THEIR NEW SAMPLER ON AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC.
POWER SOURCE CONTAINS: TOMB RAIDER, PORSCHE CHALLENGE, MONSTER TRUCKS 2 AND DESTRUCTION DERBY 2.
YES, YOUR THUMBS WILL HURT, YOUR BRAIN WILL HURT, BUT YOUR SOUL WILL BE PURE. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE PRINCE'S TRUST.



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Epidemic

With a plotline alarmingly similar to Twelve Monkeys, can the sequel to one of the PlayStation's launch games address the faults of its predecessor?



Epidemic, the sequel to Kileak: The Blood, is the latest addition to a fast growing line of mech combat games. It does feature a first-person perspective engine but should not be compared to Doom, simply because the action is very different.

This is certainly more than your average clone straight off the production line churning out seemingly endless copies of what is, let's face it, a somewhat dated gaming phenomenon. For one thing, you are never allowed to forget the fact that you are in a suit of powered armour. Your robotic feet thud on the floor, your movements are somewhat laboured and head-up displays show important information

What they lack in manoeuvrability these suits certainly make up for in terms of armour plating!



as you progress.

Actually, speaking of your feet thudding on the floor, it seems as though much of the in game atmosphere is provided by the impressive sound effects (although the graphics do play a considerable part). The voice of your computer talking to you as you explore is an innovation I'm sure will be copied many times in the future. If an enemy is targeted, the computer will rattle off its serial number and identify its weapons. Items are briefly described and doors that won't open are either locked and require a certain keycard, or need their power decreasing, which basically means you need to alter their flow of power, usually from some other location.

Your weapons are: A laser gun that recharges, an autocannon and missiles, all are easily accessible by using the triangle button to cycle through them. This may sound simplistic and somewhat limited, but there are a large variety of different missiles and the acquisition of a new mech suit changes your energy weapon considerably.

The first mech you start with has the ability to rocket through corridors with jets, but they are time limited due to fuel constraints. When you pilot the new mech you will also be allowed the use of shields but again, their use is limited.

The best aspect of Epidemic for me is the fact that the plot never really disappears during gameplay – I'm a sucker for a good story and progressive plot. As you arrive at certain objectives, other characters will contact your mech and tell you what's going on or what needs to be done, giving a real sense of achievement and satisfaction as you complete one goal and move on to the next.

Sometimes this will be right in the middle of a pitched firefight and you'll want to duck out for a while to hear the message (if you don't you run the risk of missing some piece of vital information required to ease your progress). The game is also frequently interrupted by cut scenes depicting further plot developments, or the appearance of a strong enemy robot.

These cut scenes are very impressive. They are all fully rendered so if you're the type of gamer who gets excited about that kind of stuff, Epidemic won't disappoint. It's sad then that when characters are speaking, no effort whatsoever has been made to synchronise their lip movements with the words. In some ways it's comical to watch (a bit like one of those Japanese B-Movies they show on Channel 4), but mostly annoying, unprofessional and amateur. Still, it's not a massive problem and doesn't spoil what is otherwise a highly atmospheric game.

The plot is melodramatic in a very anime



The good doctor explains to you the seriousness of the situation with your girlfriend

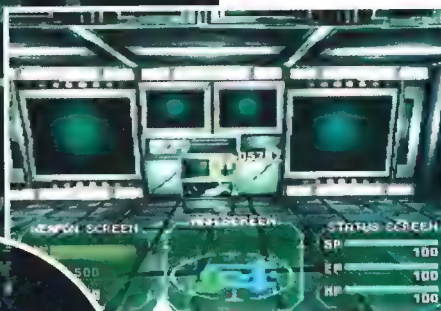
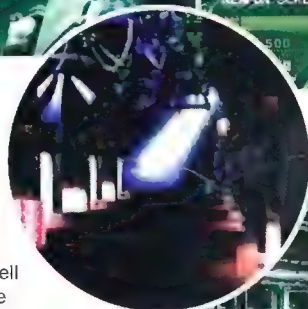
fashion. The human race is forced to exist underground due to a deadly virus. You are the ex-rebel fighting against tyranny. You thought you had left your rebellious ways behind, but are drawn back when you discover the girl you fell in love with is dying of a strange disease and needs an antidote.

What you are fighting for is left very unclear at the start of the game, and it's hard to tell what it is that makes the bad guys, well... bad. This will doubtless annoy some players, but I'm sure just as many will find themselves wondering what's going to happen next and really enjoy finding out.

Epidemic is one of those games you want to finish, if only to find out how the story ends. But just like the first one, it's unlikely that many people will see it through to a conclusion because of the plodding nature of the action and the fact that solving many of the puzzles requires nothing more than flicking a switch and moving back and forth between locations. It's all fairly slow-paced with a rather strange story line, but the need to solve the puzzles and see how the plot pans out keeps you playing for a while at least.

However, the same criticisms which, with hindsight were leveled at the original (remember Kileak the Blood was one of the first batch of PlayStation releases and back then no one knew quite what the machine was capable of, making everything seem that bit more impressive) can also be made of the sequel. For example, the level environments are hardly what you'd call exciting to run through and again, the enemies you'll encounter, while improved, are still fairly generic in appearance and, to put it bluntly, bland.. On the positive side, the gameplay has improved a fair amount and control now actually feels how you'd imagine a mech control would.

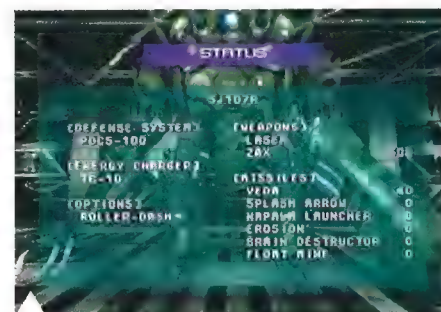
I'll have to sit on the fence on this one a bit because I know many people who disagree with me when I say that this style of game is now well past it's sell by date. However, with the likes of Tenka knocking around it's still hard to see who can find room for two new first person perspective shoot'em-ups this month, and if one has to get squeezed out I reckon that this'll be the one.



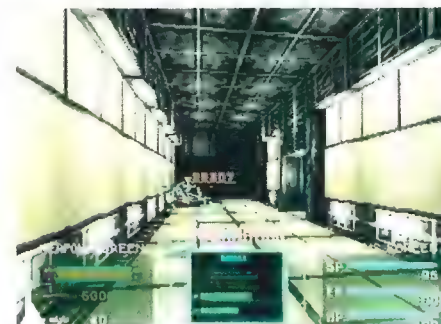
There's a distinctly atmospheric green feel to Epidemic's palette, just as there was in Kileak



Without the map you'll find yourself going round in circles in no time at all. Use it well



The status of your suit is vital to your survival. If it gets a bit knackered you know you're in real trouble, so watch your step!



The excellent targeting system not only tracks the enemy, but also tells you all about it

PRO SCORE

GAME Epidemic
GENRE Adventure
SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
CONTACT 0171 447 1600
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

While it is better than the original, Epidemic could have been so much more. I like the idea of a Mech/Doom style game that relies on some RPG elements and the progressive plot ranks up there with the best of them. However, the game shows nothing new. The graphics look great, the atmosphere can't be faulted (the police probes will probably scare the living daylights out of you for instance), but you can't help but feel that games like Epidemic need to start going in a new direction. I don't know about you, but personally I'd had my fill of flipping switches and picking up ammo a long time ago. An injection of fresh ideas would certainly be a welcome one if you ask me.

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 6

LASTABILITY 7

7

DAN A minor improvement over the original, but it's too little too late. There's nothing here that really stands out and all you're left with is yet another game that can only be described as 'alright'

JAY This is entertaining enough if you love bouts of search-and-destroy mayhem, but it's about time the multitude of violent corridor-wandering Doom clones were stopped. Let's have something new, eh?

ANDY Looks nice and plays at a leisurely pace rather than throwing a barrage of opposition at you. After a little time however, I wondered what the fuss was all about. This should be filed under bland nonsense

ALEX There are far too many games in the 3-D search and destroy genre for this to stand out in the crowd. It looks fine and is worthy of a release, but lacks the suspense and bloodshed of its superior rivals

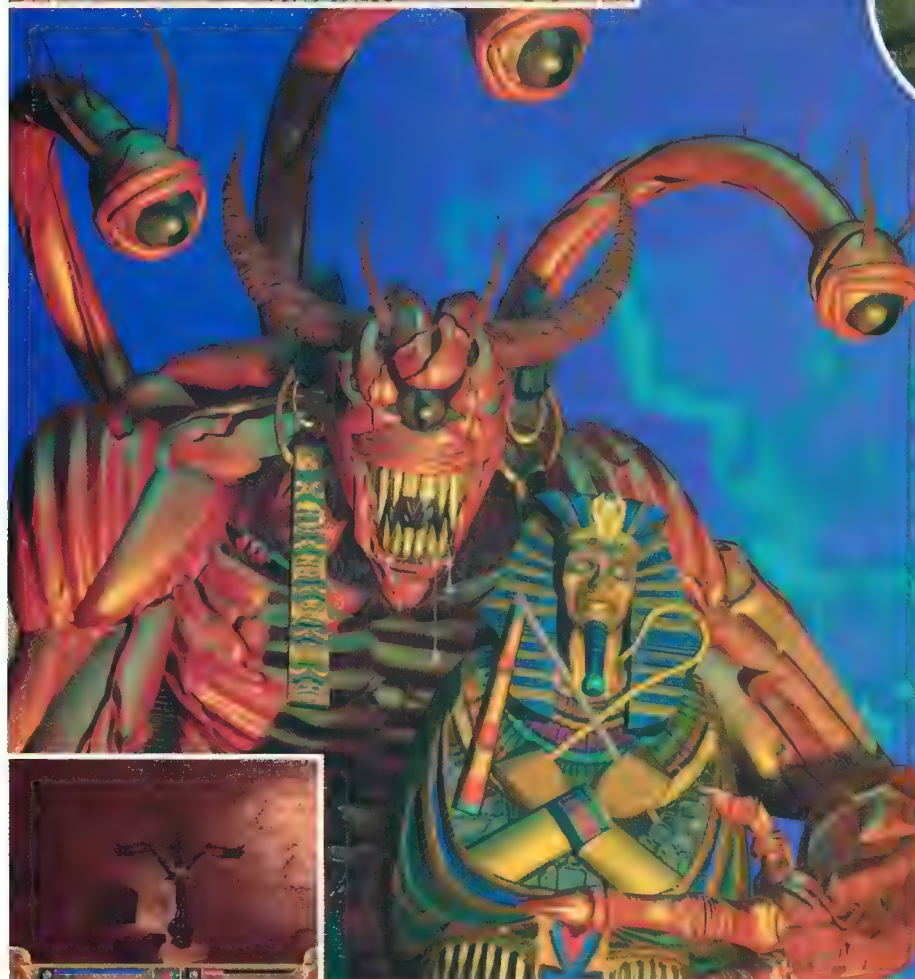
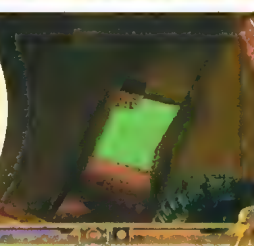
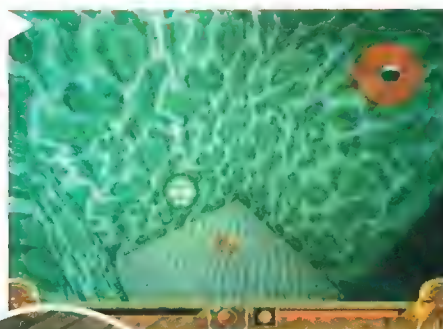
Exhumed

Many people would have you believe this is one of the best Doom clones to have ever appeared. Those people have obviously seen something we missed



These eyeballs contain either ammo for your weapon or some health. Red for health, blue for ammo. Simple as that

It's best to fill your lungs with air before taking a plunge to the depths to collect the goodies found below



Doom is responsible for spawning some of the bloodiest, most violent shoot 'em-ups ever seen. These have ranged from the sublime (Alien Trilogy, Dark Forces) to the ridiculous (Hexen, far and away the worst).

Exhumed is a bold attempt at adding a minor twist to the genre by allowing you to back track to search for items you may have missed in an earlier level. This is all well and good but it can hinder your progress a little too much and you lose interest when hopping to and fro through stages you've seen before.

The game revolves around Ancient Egypt which is under siege from the alien race Kilmaat. They have robbed the ancient Tomb of Rameses and taken the mummified remains of the Pharaoh. King Rameses is hell-bent on revenge and you're the unlucky recipient of the order to take out and defeat the entire Kilmaat force and retrieve the mummy. All this means, in the grand scale of things, is that you wander around Ancient Egyptian tombs and buildings blasting as many enemy weirdoes as possible.

Everyone should know the general format in these games by now, unless they've been frozen in time and recently woken. You progress through the stages by locating keys, unlocking doors, shooting enemies, finding useful items and generally blasting anything which moves. All of which is set in an ever more confusing plethora of twisting, spooky tunnels.

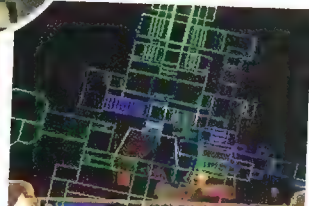
As you begin your quest you are awarded a lowly weapon in the form of a machete. You must slash your way through pots which are power-ups throughout the entire game. Some



The levels are contained in this ancient world. A camel is the only means of transport between the areas you must explore



Someone has carelessly left weapons lying around



It's dark and a map covers the screen to show you the way



You can blast targets up high and in the distance

These blokes aim a mean fireball in your direction. Side stepping comes highly recommended

pots contain extra ammo for the weapons and energy to keep you ticking along.

Some of them contain particularly nasty enemies and other power-ups are reversed, dragging your energy dangerously low. This doesn't pose much of a threat in the first couple of stages – they're unlikely to offer anyone much of a problem – but in other stages you can find yourself perilously close to your demise at a crucial moment.

The enemies range from scorpions and swooping birds of prey up to a full blown slobbering alien. As you make your progress you will get to know what form action works best against the different enemies. This is where the ultra-responsive controls come into the fore. Whereas many games of this ilk rely heavily on gore and visuals, Exhumed tackles the proceedings from the player's point of view. You can side step, jump, run, look up and down and turn with an agility seldom seem in this genre.

Targeting enemies is done automatically so your shooting doesn't need to be too accurate to be effective. It's not a haphazard as Tenka and the like, it has more in common with Doom on this score. You will have to realign your weapons from time to time, but this doesn't detract too much from your main objectives.

On top of all of the relic shenanigans you will need to locate breathing apparatus for underwater travel as there are numerous switches and power-ups dotted under the surface. There are also some pretty nifty sandals you slap on your feet to perform truly outstanding leaps across seemingly impossible

gaps and up to higher ledges. All of this adds a little something extra to the run, explore and blast tactics we've seen all too often.

A side-track to all of the objectives is collecting of parts of a transmitter which you will need to locate if you're to progress through the game in its entirety.

A game of this sort of course wouldn't be complete without a map. What's different here is that you can find a scroll with the map on hidden in the corridors to show every nook and cranny in the entire level. Similar to others such as Alien Trilogy, Doom, Dark Forces and all the best games of this sort, the map can be brought up over the main playing screen as you go. This means you can work your way to exactly the correct point without flicking backwards and forwards between the map and the main game.

Your arsenal can become more lethal than a dose of the Ebola virus and ranges from a puny machete to a hand gun, machine gun, flame thrower and upwards – each more powerful than the last. You may scroll back and forth between these at your leisure.

If there is a fault in Exhumed it's the graphics themselves. They're functional rather than outstanding. Enemies look like cardboard and when they burst, are pretty unimpressive, especially the humans. The worst aspect is the swimming effect which occurs when you turn close to a wall. They give you the feeling of being underwater. This spoils what may have been a reasonable, if slightly unimpressive, take on the genre.

PRO SCORE

GAME Exhumed

GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up

SOFTWARE HOUSE BMG

CONTACT 0171 384 7774

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

With this genre becoming more crowded than a city centre on a Saturday afternoon, there are few games which stand apart from the rest. Others are doomed to remain in obscurity until the end of time. Exhumed may struggle to keep its head above water. This doesn't mean it's a bad game by any means, it's just unimpressive in the grand scale of things. The camel is a fine mode of transport for sandy areas and is put to good use here. This is your way out of the levels and towards the next destination on your quest. Many people will enjoy this for its fresh outlook, but when compared to what's already available, it fails to impress for any length of time.

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 7

7 1/2

DAN Certainly better than Hexen, but not quite as hi-tech as Tenka, it's an applaudable effort at an increasingly tedious game style. Not bad as it goes, but nowhere near as great as it's cracked up to be

JAY Great atmosphere is not enough to save Exhumed from the depths of despair I'm afraid. Perhaps this is just one game too many but I came away from this feeling empty and alone. As usual

ALEX It's a struggle to say anything about Exhumed that hasn't been said about all the other 3-D first person perspective shoot 'em-ups in this issue. So I'll say this – go by Andy's review cos I haven't even played it

STEVE Oh good. Another Doom clone. And not just any old 'other Doom clone' either, but a bad one as well. Haven't you lot had enough of this type of stuff yet? Please, please stop buying them! They're dirt

Game Title **Tokyo Highway Battle**

Software House **THQ** A Ridge Racer wannabe lovingly converted for the British market.

Japanese Road Rage

By Alex Lee

AT FIRST GLANCE YOU'D BE FORGIVEN for thinking this is no more than a Johnny-come-too-lately Ridge Racer clone. The phrase 'You never get a second chance to create a first impression' however, doesn't apply to Tokyo Highway Battle. If anything, it offers everything Ridge Racer does and more.

Like Top Gear 2 on the SNES, apart from the racing element there's also a points system which converts into money for buying car upgrades. The first few races are thus as much an exercise in points accumulation as a way of familiarising yourself with the tracks. The cars' handling, grip, acceleration and top speed qualities will improve according to what you buy in the 'Speed Shop'. Unfortunately, however well you drive, you'll never be offered a wrap of amphetamines.

The title Tokyo Highway Battle suggests a gun toting scrap around the streets of Japan's capital. Nothing could be further from the truth; any tiny scrape against a wall, another vehicle or a tunnel wall will slow you down, adding to your total time and losing you valuable cash points.

As well as adding the buy parts feature, Tokyo Highway Battle possesses an important extra on the racing side. Mastery of the drift technique at corners which – as far as I can gather is the same as the powerslide – is vital if you're ever going to challenge Keiichi Tsuchiya, the legendary drift King. Beginners are offered the option of pressing a button to perform drift, whereas more experienced drivers can pull it off by skilful manipulation of the d-pad and acceleration button.

A total of 12 cars, all with different specifications, are up for play and improvement. Ultimately, the challenge is to equip all 12 to the nth degree with all conceivable relevant parts being bought and installed. The only downside really is that only five can be saved to memory card at any one time.

THQ has negotiated with Jaleco for the rights to publish the game over here and it could just be the stepping stone this much maligned software publisher needs to give it the credibility it desires on a format outside the Game Boy. There's nothing here to suggest that the game will flop as the Japanese version looks in no way inferior to Namco's benchmark PlayStation title, Ridge Racer.

Release Date: June



Scenario mode has two levels. Each level offers a battle with three drivers. Upon defeating six drivers, you are given the 'honour' of battling the Japanese racing professional, Keiichi Tsuchiya, better known as the legendary drift King. Points won are turned into currency which is readily accepted at the Speed Shop to upgrade your racer. Vs CPU, on the other hand, is a one-on-one battle on an open, traffic free circuit where you may use and modify all 12 cars

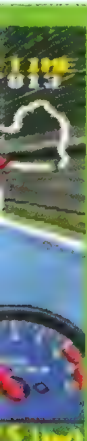


This could be the oft-pilloried THQ's finest hour

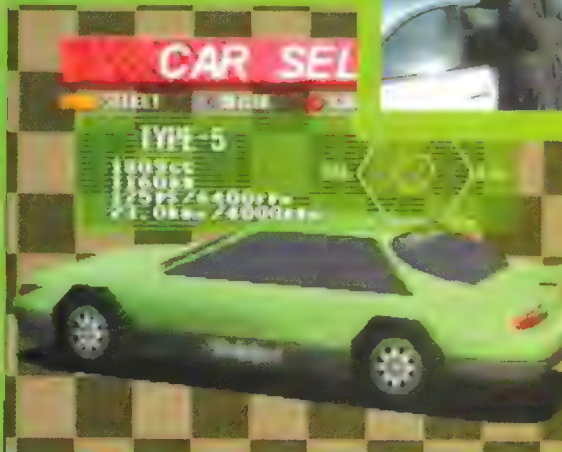
Practice mode allows you to improve your lap times by learning the intricacies of each course. In this mode, all the cars are fully modified. Selecting the options from the main view screen allows you to customise your game. You may alter the cars' names, reconfigure controller functions, change the audio settings, select BGM (whatever that is) and choose stereo or mono output



In the Car Select screen, you are presented with data that's updated as you upgrade your vehicle. There are four categories – engine displacement, which is the size of the car's engine in cubic centimetres, total weight – the vehicle's weight in kilograms, horsepower – the maximum of which can be reached at the highest revs per minute and torque – highest attained at lower rpms



Drifting – a crazy term for powersliding – can be done in two ways. For more experienced gamers, the traditional method of d-pad manipulation and accelerating is the best way, but beginners can make use of the drift button. Successful mastery of drifting knocks precious seconds off your lap times



Some of the engine parts that can be purchased are as follows – small turbine, medium turbine, large turbine, turbo inter-cooler, bolt-on turbo, increase bore, port polishing, low compression piston, oil cooler, large capacity radiator, racing plug, high lift camshaft and fuel injection. Not all of these, however, are compatible with every car

Transport Tycoon

Shout thrice hurrah for the arrival of the least environmentally friendly game ever. Demolish forests! Build unnecessary roads! Bludgeon baby seals! Etc!



This 3-D close-up view is actually pretty useless. It's pretty and it's useless. Makes nice screen shots though

Which side of the road you drive on makes no difference to the game, it's just a nice, thoughtful addition



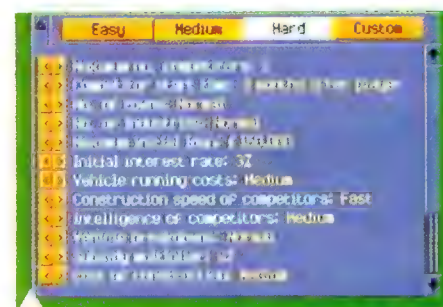
That's the way to do it! A handy train station next to a lucrative coal mine. Big bucks, guaranteed



It's not all tarmac and grime. There's an option to replant trees to appease the green lobby



Get the bulldozers out. You'll see more of this message than you'd like to I'm afraid



Practically every variable in the game can be altered to make life as easy, or as hard, as your little heart desires

I think it's fair to say that deep within all of us there lurks a desire to own a massive transport company. Why, it's as natural a desire as wanting food, warmth and sexual gratification. Even wolves share this dream, such is its basic appeal. So come on, don't hide it. Be proud of your fantasy. Stand on the rooftops and scream at the world, "I have an unquenchable need to run a transport contractor company, battling for council subsidies and tinkering with bus timetables". Done it? Feel better? Good. Now go away, you're scaring me.

Those of you who are left are probably thinking the same as I did when I first played this. You're thinking "I bought my PlayStation so I could play games like Tekken 2 and Wipeout. Why would I want a game that requires you to give a flying arse about the difference between a coal truck and a mail van?" I'll tell you why.

As we grow older, and hopefully wiser, we realise that the flashy thrills of youth no longer have the appeal they used to. We start to crave a semblance of stability, we buy big expensive books about interior decorating and contemplate visiting a garden centre. We start to look for games that require something more meaningful than hitting a fat Japanese man in the face with a stick. And that's usually when we turn to Microprose, purveyors of all things brainy and grown up.

Here is its latest. Another PC conversion and,



as you've probably already surmised from the screenshots, we're heading down the freeway sign posted 'Sim City'. But whereas Sim City concentrated on buildings and suchlike, Transport Tycoon (surprisingly) focuses on the bits between the buildings. The roads, train tracks, docks and airports. Can you amass a fortune by creating the best road network, the most efficient rail system, the most economic air freight business? There's only one way to find out.

This is one of those games that's immensely complicated to explain bit by bit, so let's play through an imaginary game to get the basics. Ready? Good. We start off by naming our company, choosing a colour scheme for our vehicles and even choosing a face for yourself. That done, we see the game world for the first time. Scroll about a bit, getting an idea of where the big cities are and where the primary industries are located. Once you've got your bearings, place your company HQ somewhere out of the way, but close to a money spinning location.

Now have another look around, on the scout for our first venture. You're looking for any large towns within easy reach of each other or perhaps two industries that rely on each other. Let's say we've found two towns. By linking these towns and providing some form of transport between them, you can start earning wonga and also boost the town's growth. So we build a road between them.

We might have to level out the land between, maybe build a tunnel or a bridge, but once the road's in place we can set up bus stations and let people start commuting. Maybe we could add a mail service for good measure once business picks up.

Create several of these bus links to keep the money coming in – a circle of linked towns will provide a steady income – and we can turn our attention to the big money. Dotted about the landscape are industries. Factories, mines, power stations, farms and other commercial interests.

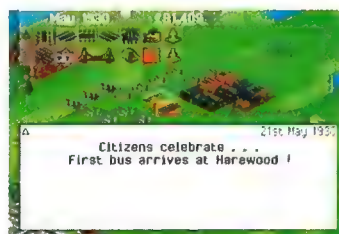
Each of these will require some product, or produce something of use elsewhere. Click on a power station for instance, and we'll see it needs coal. Find a coal mine. Is it close enough to justify the expense of building a link? If so,

build a train station at the power station and one at the mine and build a track between them. Add a depot, build a train with a coal truck and instruct it to load up at the mine and deliver to the power station. Bingo! Big money every time the train unloads. Now repeat.

That, in a very basic fashion, is Transport Tycoon. Your job is to connect people, run an efficient service and beat your competitors to the lucrative business opportunities. Simple, eh?

Once the money's piling up, you can experiment with airports, docks and monorail systems for faster, bigger and more profitable ways of getting about. New vehicles arrive on the scene all the time and you have to decide which best suits your needs and whether a road or rail link is the correct way to go. Politics plays a part as well. Subsidies will be offered to the first company to link two specific towns and you can use dirty tricks to cripple the other transport companies before they get started. Advertising campaigns can be used to steal customers or, if you're really shrewd, you'll build in your opponent's path forcing them to take expensive detours.

So you see, what sounds at first like a deathly dull idea for a game is actually a pretty involving bout of ruthless business practice and skulduggery. But it's not all roses and cream, I'm afraid. As with any game of this complexity, the cramming ▶



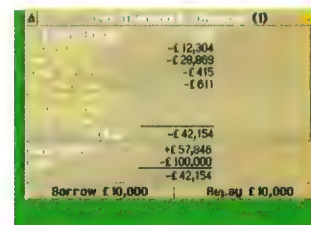
My current choice of road-based transport, somewhat handsily obscured by that other grab



A bridge may look impressive, but it's not always the most economical option. It might be cheaper to build around small lakes



If you like graphs and figures, Transport Tycoon has more than enough to keep you smiling



Choose a name, a face and a paint job for all your vehicles and you're ready to start

Transport Tycoon

► and compromises made to adapt it for a console have left their scars. The interface, so intuitive on the PC, becomes rather slow and cumbersome on the PSX. It is fully compatible with the Sony mouse which is a bonus, but if you haven't got one of those, it all becomes a bit clunky.

I'd also recommend you lower the difficulty level, or at least slow the competition down, as there's nothing more irritating than hearing they've completed their third airport while you're still on your first railway. Their construction speed, along with most of the game's other variables, can be adjusted for a custom game though, so anyone can find their pace.

However, there were two things that made it difficult for me to enjoy the game. Firstly, the fact that each bend and turn in the roads and train tracks has to be put there manually. You can't just click and drag the road round a corner for instance. You have to select road sections

pointing in the various directions to change the path of the road. Not only is this time consuming and prone to error, it's pointless as it could so easily have been changed.

The other problem is that it's often hard to see which way the land slopes. As you can't build on uneven land, this slows you down even more. You can level or raise the ground, but the perspective makes it hard to see which you need to do. Quite often, you'll end up making an even bigger mess of the land by raising and lowering until it resembles a bomb site.

These problems can be traced back to the PC original though, and if you're looking for a meaty business and strategy game, I doubt these relatively minor hiccups will make much of a difference. It may sound like the ultimate in bland game concepts, but Transport Tycoon has a lot more to offer than most other titles. A lot better than you think it is, you blinkered ape.



Beat the other companies to this contract and any transport along that route will pay up to quadruple the normal profit margin. Local governments, eh?



Once you get used to the game, you can try more extravagant tricks, like this posh multi-platformed rail terminus



Aircraft are there for the taking as well, although you'll be lucky to afford them

WIN! An In-Car Sound System Worth Over £250!



Oh, indeed yes. Microprose, one of many software houses blessed with more money than sense, have coughed up again for yet another competition, loosely based on its latest game. Simply by telling them that Steve needed an urgent fudge transplant, we've conned them out of more than £600.

Now, we could quite easily have taken this money down the pub and pissed it away in a frenzy of real ale. But we didn't. Oh no. Instead, we popped into town, located the nearest quality Sony electronic goods vendor and purchased three, yes three, fantastic Sony car cassette/radios. Each one is worth over £250, so you're not talking about yer basic two-knobs and an eject button here.

The correct name for these enviable bits of kit is XR-6700RDS. It features, according to the brochure, Dolby sound, blank skip, intro scan, ISO connector and a detachable front panel with an alarm. It also features lots of things with initials that I don't understand, but has got loads of buttons so it must be good. To be in with a chance of winning one of these musical monkeys, just write and tell us what sort of power Thomas the Tank Engine uses.

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Sim City
Software House Maxis

Another PC conversion, but Sim City offers more control over the game world than Tycoon. Its click and drag interface makes building easier as well, allowing complex street layouts to be built in next to no time. Tycoon offers a slightly more in-depth experience, but is held back by the cumbersome interface. To be honest though, strategy fans will be happy with either game

PRO SCORE

GAME Transport Tycoon

GENRE Strategy

SOFTWARE HOUSE Microprose

CONTACT 0990 998877

RELEASE DATE April

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED If you're looking for business strategy

simulation, then the range of options here is admirable and should keep brainboxes busy until the wee small hours. It'll especially appeal to those who yearn for the days of train sets and fat controllers. It's a shame you don't have more direct control over the game world, as you always feel more like a spectator than an active participant. And it's a pity that the interface is so laborious, making lengthy construction a bit of a chore. Add an occasionally confusing perspective and it's enough to make the game less fun than it should be. Get past those problems though, and it's a serviceable think 'em-up that should offer long term appeal for strategy-loving games players.

GRAPHICS 6

SOUND 6

GAMEPLAY 7

LASTABILITY 8



STEVE You already know if you're going to like this. The only worries you may have should be eased if I say that this is a well executed, easy to play business management simulation that will engross strategy fans

JAY I'm sorry, but I can't see the attraction. The thrill of building train stations, organising bus routes and watching tiny things moving about in a Sim City stylee doesn't exactly make my gaming glands moist either

ANDY Strategy games are something you either love or hate. If you enjoy games like Sim City, you won't go wrong with this. It's more of the same only you build road, rail and air links instead of cities

ALEX Trainspotters will love this and I don't mean the cast of the best British movie ever. I'm not a fan, but I can appreciate its appeal. There are more hours of decent gameplay here than in most PlayStation offerings

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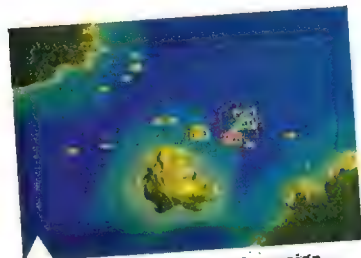
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Battle Stations

Battle Stations? Arse Stations more like. Oh dear. Sounds like the ship's hit the fan with Electronic Arts' ill-advised spot of naval gazing



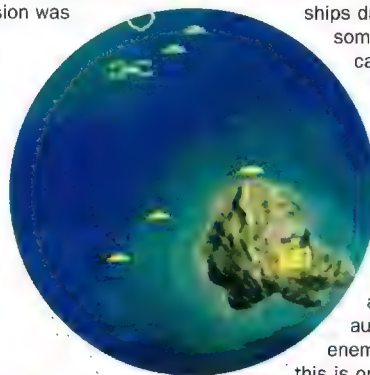
Following an almost exciting battle, a big ship is belching smoke and flames. "Abandon ship" they'll cry. As will you, if you buy this dirge



The oh-so-very-strategic Campaign mode. Move your icons around before returning to the 'action' scenes



A screenshot taken roughly three minutes after the last one. Look! Everything's moved about!



A good idea: Write a strategy based action game featuring battleships and naval goings-on. Allow players to control everything from aircraft carriers to submarines. Include in depth missions, requiring top notch tactical thinking and challenging artificial intelligence. A bad idea: Write a game like Battle Stations and try to pass it off as the aforementioned good idea.

Battle Stations seems to think that it's a naval battle simulation. It's not. It's a simulation of ships chundering around each other in circles. And that's about it. No, I couldn't believe it either. It's one of those games that you assume is really involved, just because it looks like it should be. My first impression was

that it was awful. But I also thought that I probably hadn't seen the game properly and must be missing something. Several reads through the manual later, and many more painful games played, nothing had changed. If anything, I was even more baffled.

Here's how it works. You can choose to play an arcade or campaign game. Arcade mode simply consists of two ships going round in circles, so you'd assume that the real meat of the game was in the campaign mode. But there's as much meat here as there is in Linda McCartney's larder. In this mode, you move tiny icons around a map until they meet. And then you switch to the arcade mode where the

ships drive around in circles. There are some objectives to be met in each campaign, but as the method you use to achieve them boils down to going round in circles, it's a bit pointless discussing it any further.

The arcade bit then. Two ships going round in circles. Just how exciting can that be? Not very, is the rather obvious answer. Each ship has a target crosshair, which can automatically home in on the enemy or be moved manually. Once this is on the other ship, it turns red and any weapons will be aimed at that spot. You then prod one of the buttons to unleash an

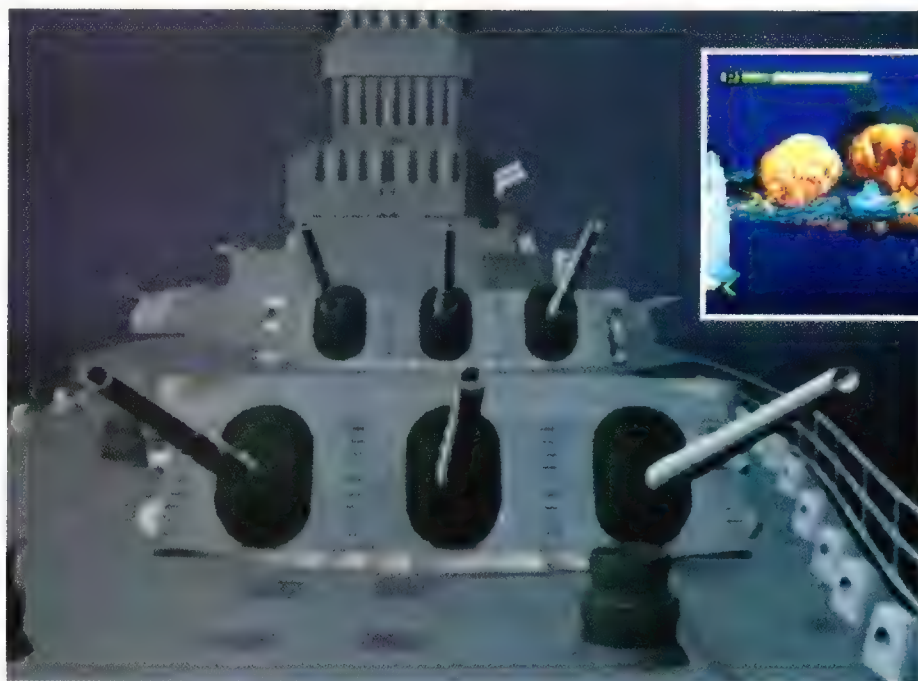
attack. Each vessel has its own attacks to compliment the usual guns and missiles. For instance, the aircraft carrier can launch little fighters to drop bombs, and the submarine can submerge and fire torpedoes.

Each button corresponds to different attacks, but as these vary from vessel to vessel, you'll need to memorise about 50 different uses for each

button to master the whole fleet. Actually, there's hardly any point in telling you this much, as even hammering all the buttons can sometimes elicit no response.

Victory is usually due to chance rather than any sort of fantastic skill. You're supposed to be able to use defensive weaponry as well, but despite hitting every possible button combination, I've yet to see evidence of this. There was one occasion where I think I managed to shoot down an incoming air strike, but I could be mistaken. Basically, there's a vast gulf between what the manual says you can do and what you actually see on-screen. Never a good sign.

Now usually, even with the very worst games,

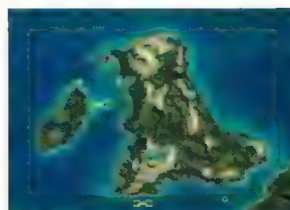




Those flying paint brushes are actually deadly cruise missiles, heading for your face



Yet more 'big ship explosion' laughs. Imagine this, over and over again. That's Battle Stations



there's something half decent you can find to say about them. But this is something I've never encountered before. A game that has absolutely nothing going for it. It's so flimsy you could sneeze and blow a hole in it. Repeatedly hammering the buttons to wear down the other boat's energy bar, with little or no idea of what weapons you're actually using, is all there is to the game. Even the strategic sounding campaign mode (or war games in two player mode) is nothing more than a pointless bout of icon moving inbetween the shooting.

I'd love it if there were more to this game and I was proved wrong, but after many painful days of play I've yet to find one redeeming feature. The sheer shallowness of the action could be seen as a harmless laugh – if you conveniently forget the fact that this will cost you more than a good night out. When Jay saw it he called it a 'beat 'em-up with ships'. He's almost right. If he'd said it's like a crap beat 'em-up with ships, he'd have hit the nail on the head. Imagine if all Soul Blade required you to do was hammer two buttons repeatedly. You wouldn't be impressed would you?

The saddest element of this whole sorry farrago is that there's a real market for a decent naval simulator. The potential is there for a real humdinger. Maybe a bit like Soviet Strike with destroyers. But the battles in this are just ludicrous. The sight of two huge aircraft carriers chasing each other around in tight circles, about two feet from dry land, is so surreal it beggars belief. And as that's basically all there is to the game, there's very little else to say. You might be tempted, just because it looks so novel. Don't be fooled. It's...it's...it's just sodding ridiculous. Utter, utter rubbish.



Ooh look! Missions! Betcha they're glorified rounds of boaty-shooto nonsense. And they are



Eight different vessels to choose from, none of which respond in the way you'd like them to

PRO SCORE

GAME Battle Stations

GENRE Boat Shooting

SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts

CONTACT 01753 549442

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

There are games that are obviously bad, poorly programmed and flappy around the edges. There are games that show promise but cock up thanks to a few glaring errors. And then there are games like this. It's like half a demo. An unfinished demo at that. The main question is why? Why has anybody written this? Why would anybody think there was anywhere near enough in it to justify asking for money? And why would you want to buy it? You wouldn't. It's almost worth taking a look just to share our amazement that such an dismal experience even exists. It's so bad it's almost funny. But it's just not worth the effort it'd take to even look at it. More of a crimson turd than Crimson Tide.

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 6

GAMEPLAY 2

LASTABILITY 1

2

STEVE Never has a game been so totally devoid of plus points as Battle Stations. I'm surprised Dan found it in his heart to give this a kind two out of 10! Electronic Arts? Electronic Arse more like!

JAY Remember that old Athena poster starring the wounded soldier with "Why?" written across it in big letters? Well they should replace the soldier with the box artwork for Battle Stations. This is arse pie

ALEX Not only can I not believe that Electronic Arts is behind this, but also the fact that Sony has approved it for release. It's possibly the most ludicrous, pointless PlayStation game I've ever seen

ANDY Hopefully the box will come with a guidance warning stating that this contains useless material which shouldn't be touched by anyone with a keen sense of purchase. It's no fun in any department. Total driv

Game Title **OddWorld: Abe's Odyssey**

Software House **GT Interactive** A new breed of interactive entertainment is allegedly on the way

Out Come The Freaks

By Jay Sharples

ABE IS A NAIVE SLAVE labourer, sweating his guts out daily in an intergalactic meat processing plant owned by the mega corporation known as Rupture Farms. He stacks crates of Juicy Puke meat treats all day, every day and things don't look like they're gonna change much. His bosses treat him like dirt – they've even sewn his lips shut so he can't even whistle while he works – and Abe's life is a fairly dull existence.

One day Abe stumbles across the recipe to the latest meat product – The Tasty Gristle Treat – and things really start looking bad. A secret ingredient is required for this new line and it seems as if it's Abe and his workmates who'll be going in the pot come dinner time. This, unsurprisingly, upsets Abe and he clocks off early and goes to see the local Shaman.

The Shaman enlightens Abe about his family history and, apparently, Abe's ancestors weren't always slaves. In fact they were once feared for their mind-bending chanting rituals. It also turns out Abe's people foretold that a saviour would one day come to liberate them from evil.

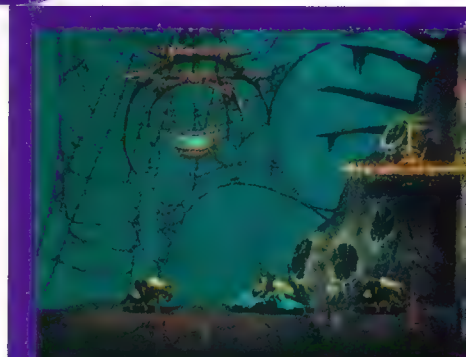
As Abe ponders over the relevance of this brief history lesson it soon becomes clear he is the aforementioned saviour and the one to end Rupture Farm's annihilation of his race! Hurrah! To do this Abe needs to go on an ancient spiritual quest known as 'The Hope'. Once it is completed, Abe will have the power to bring havoc to the doors of Rupture Farm and release his enslaved brothers.

And so the story begins...

You may be wondering what all that was about. Let me just tell you that is the opening to a massive series of five inter-linking games being released by GT Interactive. The series is called OddWorld and Abe's Odyssey is the first one to be released over here. You control Abe, the avenger alien, and the other games in the series will feature another character from OddWorld as the main basis for the story. No doubt Abe will make a cameo appearance in the other games, but for now, he's in the spotlight.

The game has been created using the world's finest 3-D techniques and, as you can see from the screenshots, it all looks wonderful. Pretty looks and a fancy storyline aren't the only impressive feature in OddWorld. Oh no. Players get to experience the revolutionary new 'Story Dwelling' style of play, which combines story telling with action gaming and non-stop interactivity with the immersive qualities of the finest role-playing adventures. Abe's Odyssey looks brilliant, plays even better and I'd wager it's going to be a smash hit when finally released.

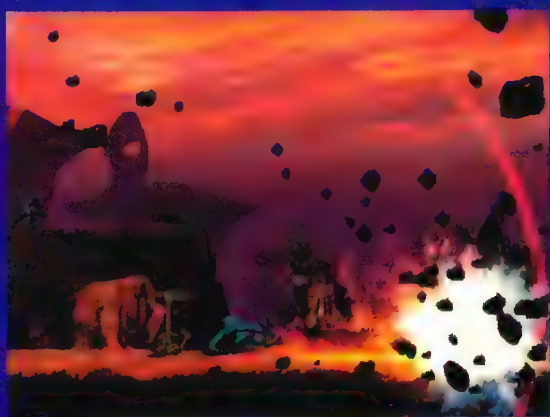
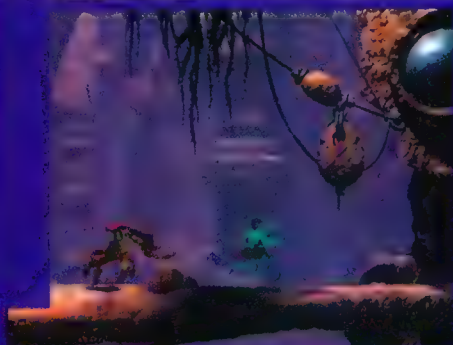
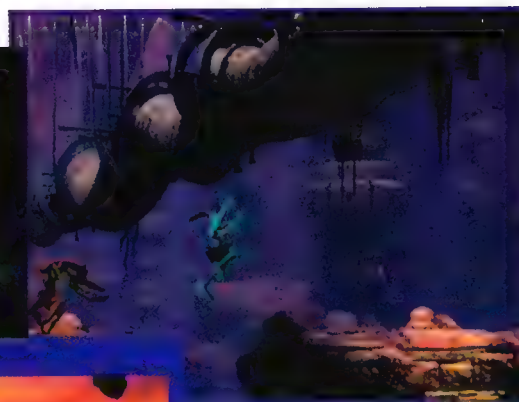
Release Date: September



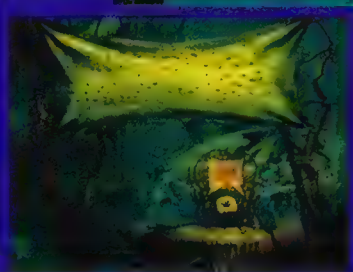
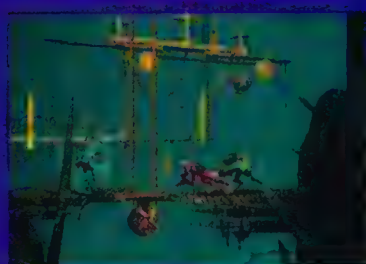
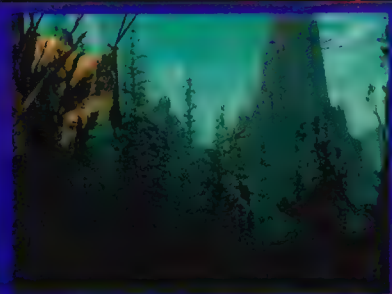
The main aim of 'story dwelling' is to emulate the emotional state of the player. By observing the player's actions, the game can determine the player's probable state of mind and creates a bond between the character being used and the player controlling it. Victory, exhaustion, frustration, fear, happiness and sorrow can all be experienced and are reflected in Abe's on-screen behaviour

s way. The question is, are you ready for it?

All the characters in the game (except for certain nasty enemies of course) will interact with Abe thanks to the wonderful GameSpeak feature. This gives players the ability to speak, via Abe, to the various OddWorld inhabitants. By simply holding down R1 or L1 and bashing the other buttons, players can enjoy hours of chatting and whistling, whilst being able to get annoyed, confused and experience bouts of flatulence with ease



Character evolution is another important aspect of the OddWorld environment. Its creators don't want players to simply hop, skip and jump their way to the end of the game with ease, they want them to acquire knowledge, wisdom, experience and skills while playing so they can return to 'tough' sections of the game and eventually complete them



Abe isn't the only character in the game with brains. OddWorld's more evil inhabitants are a smart bunch too. Each one of Abe's enemies can see and hear him coming - certain ones can even smell him! They also interact with the storyline, as do you. If you kill one of the guards for example, his workmates will come over from another part of the level and check out what's going on



Game Title **Spider**

Software House **BMG** The people who brought you Pandemonium and Legacy Of Kain

The Eight Legged Groove Machine

By Dan Whitehead

SPIDER IS ABOUT A SPIDER. Fantastic logic, or what? If we carry on this mode of thinking then Doom could be called Bloke. And Tomb Raider would be called Bird. Destruction Derby 2 becomes Car. Just think of the possibilities. Crash Bandicoot becomes, er, Crash Bandicoot actually. Anyway, BMG's latest is indeed about a spider. But, in one of those plot twists that only science fiction can get away with, this spider has been spliced with the mind of a top nano-technology scientist. How many more ridiculous plot developments can you handle? At least one more, I hope, as this isn't your common or garden fly-munching bathroom intruder we're dealing with here. Heck no. This is a nano-technology cyborg spider, with the ability to attach robot power ups to its legs for weapons capabilities. Ber-limey. Makes your Bandicoots look a tad mundane, that's for sure. The same accident (or rather terrorist attack) that leads to the spider/scientist mind splice has also, rather unfortunately, released hundreds of similar experiments. Laser-wielding wasps, bomb-chucking bats, plasma-gobbing rats and spiders not unlike yourself are all crawling over the lab. If you want to track down your human form and return to it, you'll have to get involved in more than a little fisticuff action.

Shiny new robo-legs boost your powers, offering heat-seekers, flame throwers and boomerangs to your arsenal, so things aren't as bleak as they look. On top of these new fangled gadgets, you've always got your traditional spider powers to fall back on, Peter Parker style. You can climb walls, scuttle along the underside of platforms and even dangle from webs for a bit of ninja-rope swinging. No spider sense unfortunately, but you can't have everything. You can, however, have a pseudo 3-D platformer – that's what Spider is. Imagine a creepy-crawly version of Pandemonium, and you won't be far off. It shares Pandemonium's fixed path through the 3-D environment, which some people felt was cheating slightly. I didn't mind, to be honest, and I'm not bothered now either. The spider-like abilities add a gimmicky element of fun, and the sticking to walls and ceilings opens up the platform genre in a minor but amusing way.

The best bit, in my mind though, is the animation. The titular spider scuttles, crawls and creeps about in a shiver-inducing manner. It's very realistic (apart from the missiles and lasers obviously) and arachnophobes might be advised to steer clear. Everyone else should form a disorderly queue for what could be the quirky platform experience of the year.

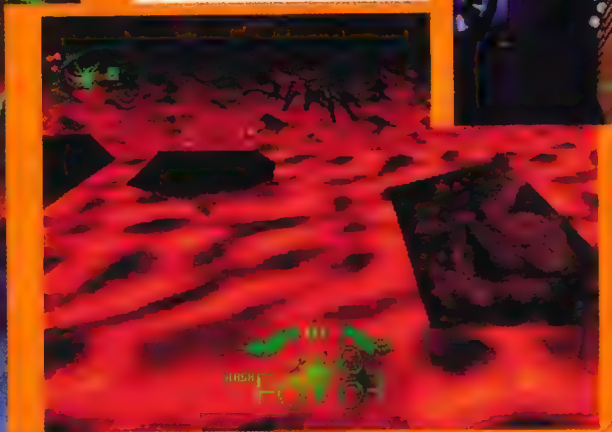
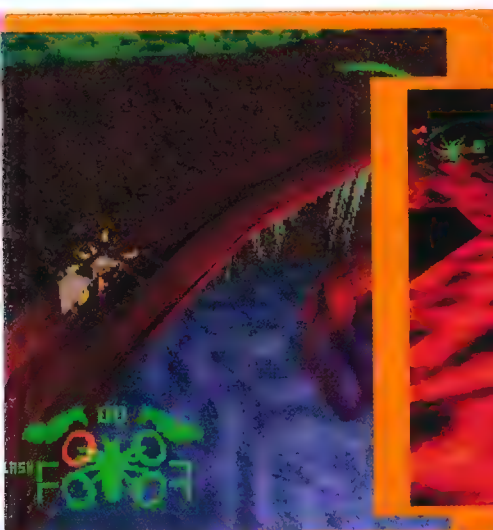
Release Date: April



Spider is the creation of Seattle based Boss Games, a spin off from Boss Films. Who are they? Why, only the team of experts and smarty pants put together by special effects guru Richard Edlund for his own studio. Who's Richard Edlund? Well, you ignoramus, he's the four time Academy Award winner responsible for the ground breaking visual effects in Raiders Of The Lost Ark, Ghostbusters, Poltergeist, Species and some low budget flop called Star Wars. If his games division is anywhere near as god-like as his film team, it should be a name to watch

are about to get all incey wincey on us

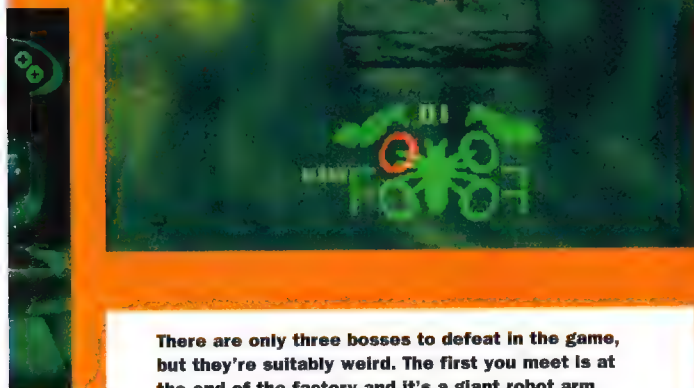
With over 30 levels, *Spider* is a pretty lengthy experience. The levels take you from the trashed laboratory through to the evil terrorist den and your human body. On the way you'll scamper through a factory, a museum, the sewers and the deadly city streets. Each level boasts all manner of technical trickery which is described by Boss Games using big words that we don't understand. But we've seen the game in motion and it looks great. That's all you need to know for now



Did you know... that tarantulas can go without eating for over five months? Or that spiders outnumber humans by something scary like 3000 to 1? Or that spiders are actually pretty stupid and only really react to the environment around them like weird, crazy zombies? Or that spiders have no blood clotting agents and so any small cut can lead to them bleeding to death? Or that the most common name for pet spiders is 'Hairy Bob'? Or, finally, that tarantulas can live up to and sometimes over 25 years old? You see, a spider isn't just for platform games, it's a handy educational tool as well



Boss Game Studios has one more game in the pipeline, but unfortunately it's a racing game for that posh Nintendo64 thing all the young kids want. So it's a bit pointless bringing it up here really. Well, not that pointless as it has allowed me to fill another lengthy caption having run out of info concerning the game I'm supposed to be writing about. Which is probably annoying for you, but a great help for me. The game, should you still be reading, is called *Top Gear Rally*. It'll probably be really good as well



There are only three bosses to defeat in the game, but they're suitably weird. The first you meet is at the end of the factory and it's a giant robot arm dead set on pulverising you. Next up is a reanimated pig foetus. Hmmm, nice. And finally, you'll do battle with a disembodied brain that tries to skewer you with its cybernetic spinal column and shoots lasers from its hideous floating eyes. So if spiders don't make you squeamish, the bosses certainly will. Pass the bucket...



Game Title **Wing Commander IV**

Software House **Electronic Arts** Continuing our Star Wars themed issue, here's your

If I Had A Hamill...

By Dan Whitehead

THE WING COMMANDER SERIES has, on the PC at least, been the cause of much foaming at the mouth from ecstatic games players. Its involved plot lines and stonking interstellar action has won it millions of fans world-wide. The addition of top-notch cinematic sequences in the later games helped, obviously, as they contained a cast of faces that you could actually recognise. Mark 'Luke Skywalker' Hamill! Malcolm 'A Clockwork Orange' McDowell! That bloke who played the bully in *Back To The Future*! Why, it was almost like a sci-fi version of Oscar night.

Cast adrift from the PC harbour, *Wing Commander III* made it onto the PlayStation to a fairly muted round of applause, so how will its illustrious sequel fare? Well, seeing as it used 38 full-size sets, was shot on 35mm film and cost more money to make than Andy spends on CDs every week, it was always going to look more impressive, if nothing else.

The game takes place after the war against the Kilrathi, that raged through the first three games, has ended. Blair (Mark Hamill), the hero of the war, has retired to a desert planet to be a farmer. Spot the in-joke yet, film fans? Anyway, one day while he's having a swift bevvy, his old mate Maniac (Bloke from *Back To The Future*) pops up and recalls him to active service. It seems that, now the war is over, the frontier systems known as the Border Planets have been getting uppity. Terrorism, piracy and general disruption is the result, and the Confederation finds itself fighting corruption from within.

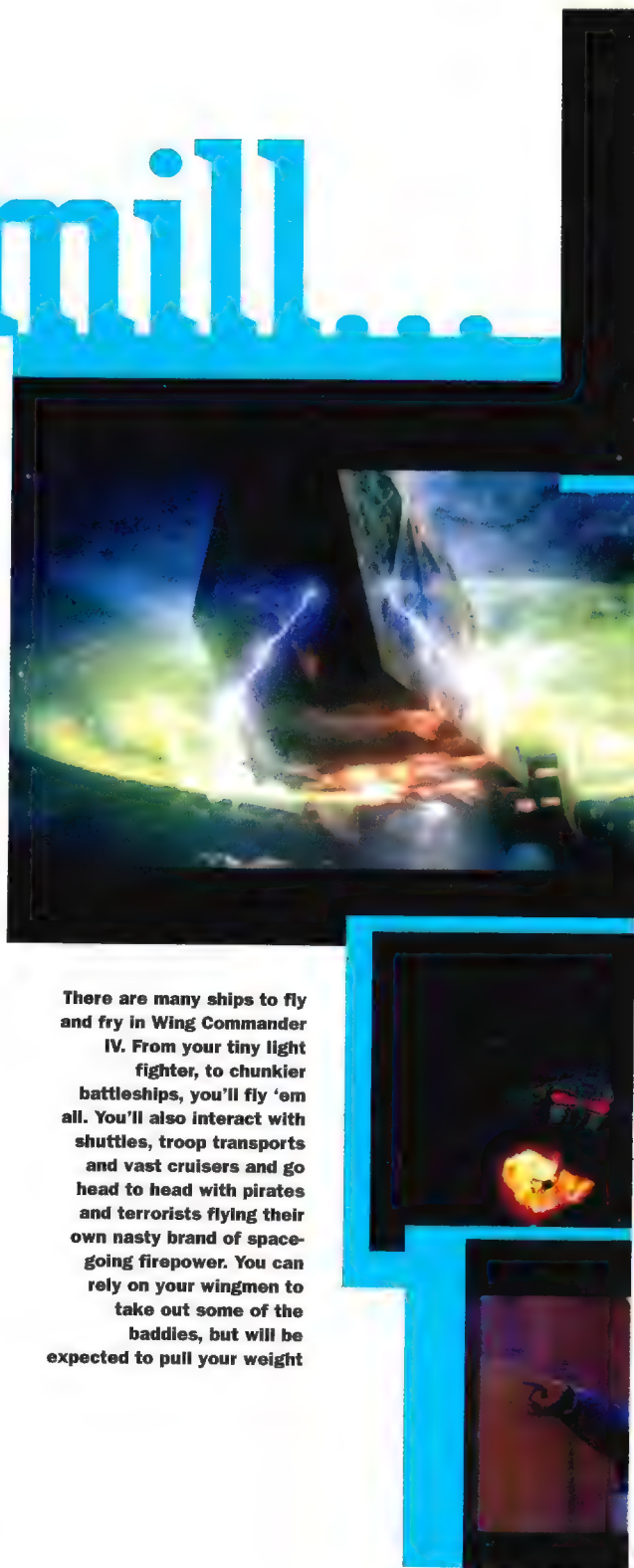
Following the tried and tested route of previous games, you'll fly various missions alongside CPU wingmen, with each task book ended by some FMV to weave the story through the game. It's an arcadey flight sim basically, with glamorous Hollywood tassles. And as it requires a hefty four CDs to hold all the movie scenes, it's fair to say it's going to be a big game as well.

Throughout the game you're required to make decisions which will affect the rest of the game. Some of the decisions are made during the story scenes, but some have to be made in flight. If you dither about too much in a situation like that, the story will move on without you, possibly leading you in a direction you didn't want to go in.

Split second decisions are essential, in other words.

The early PAL version we've got moves quite nicely, and the FMV moves the story along in a suitably atmospheric manner. The space combat is pretty gripping, so this could be the title to finally endear the *Wing Commander* series to the stubborn PlayStation audience.

Release date: May



There are many ships to fly and fry in *Wing Commander IV*. From your tiny light fighter, to chunkier battleships, you'll fly 'em all. You'll also interact with shuttles, troop transports and vast cruisers and go head to head with pirates and terrorists flying their own nasty brand of space-going firepower. You can rely on your wingmen to take out some of the baddies, but will be expected to pull your weight

chance to see what Mr. Skywalker's been up to away from the Rebellion



To enhance the cinematic feel of the game, all the FMV appears in widescreen (saving memory and justifying that annoying letterbox effect PAL games have) and the music and sound effects are all pumped out in Dolby Surround. So if you've got one of those big posh tellies like we have, the spaceships swoop from each side and the laser fire echoes around the office. It is great for us, but does scare the people from more timid mags

Luke Who's Talking

Mark Hamill, forever typecast as weedy farmboy Luke Skywalker, has been the star of the filmed chunks of Wing Commander for some years now. And here, he speaks exclusively to PlayStation Pro about his role in the games. Honestly. Well, OK, maybe I cut and pasted it from an Internet chat session he did. But it's the thought that counts.

What led you to become involved in the field of computer games?

I was doing animation voice-overs. In fact, when I went out for Wing Commander, I thought it was going to be animation. What really surprised me was the incredible success of the CD-Rom. Wing Commander had a \$12 million opening day. I thought, "Gee, if I had done movies like this, I'd have a career".

Have you been approached about doing another Wing Commander?

Yes, I have been tentatively been approached to do another one, because the first two did well over \$100 million, but like I said with the second one, "Show me the script". I wouldn't have done the second one if it wasn't as good as it was. It really wasn't a rehash of the first one - it stood on its own and was much more political intrigue than space combat.

Do you know of any plans to bring the Wing Commander saga to the big screen?

The movie version is in the planning stages and, ironically, they go back 20 years so that my character would be just getting out of the Academy. I have this knack of picking franchises that go back in time. Even with a talented makeup artist and great lighting, I don't think I could play 20 anymore, unless we're in a galaxy where you age backwards.

Much of the game's plot development takes place in and around the Officer's Mess. Here you'll get to chat with the other pilots (or rather you can watch FMV sequences of Mark Hamill chatting with them) and the odd snippet of information might leak out. For this reason, it's always worth chatting with anyone who's about. You see, there's definitely something amiss in the Confederation, and I'm willing to bet it'll be you who ends up sorting everything out

Game Title **Heaven's Gate**

Software House **JVC** Good old 3-D versus beat 'em-up genre, eh? It's officially the best.

Celestial's Scrap

By Alex Lee

JVC HAS TO BE THE SPECIALIST in releasing Pal versions of Japanese games with odd titles over here. Last month's preview section showcased Wing Over, a dreadfully titled aeroplane dog-fighting game and now we have Heaven's Gate, a 3-D versus beat 'em-up – would you credit it?

I personally haven't got anything against 3-D beat 'em-ups. Tekken and Tekken 2 are both fine games, as is Star Gladiator, and when the PlayStation first came out Toshinden pretty much blew me away. The thing is, unless a game offers something new to an established genre I can't really see the point in releasing it at all. There is the argument that fanatics of any given style of game will soon tire of their collection and buy anything that may satisfy their need for more. Heaven's Gate serves this purpose, but not a great deal else from what I can see.

Projectile attacks are in there. Throws are in there. Stomps are in there. Ring outs are in there. Hidden force fields are in there. The characters are weird, some carry weapons, there's a close-up of the fighter who wins as well as a brief action replay of the final knockout move. And so on. But there's nothing new! Hold on...

Some of the arenas have ceilings. That's unusual. Excellent! Some of the more agile scrappers can jump up to the ceiling, cling on for a bit, then swoop down onto their hapless opponents, causing them no end of damage. So, a USP – I hereby humbly apologise for my previous bad-mouthing of the game, which to be honest, is no better or worse than the majority of PlayStation beat 'em-ups.

At the time of writing, JVC is working on converting Atlus' Japanese game into Pal, so the only available manual is Japanese with the usual bizarre mish-mash of Japanese and English text. It's possible to ascertain the cast's age, blood type, height and weight. For example, Chun Li/Ellis wannabe is 17, has blood type O, is 162cm tall (about five foot five, I think) and weighs 48Kg (dunno what that is in stones), but as for her country of origin, likes, dislikes and hobbies I haven't got a clue – you'll just have to wait until JVC sends us a British manual.

Flicking further through the manual, I stumbled across a couple of fine proof reading oddities. Training mode is, according to the manual, Trainning mode, Sasa, a busty bird, is meant to be five years old and leopard skin clad A Hau's battle cry is, 'coincidentally, 'Take On Me'. Actually, I lied about A Hau, but anyone who can remember Norwegian pop trio A Ha should at least have let out a low groan by now. Heaven can wait, but can you wait for Heaven's Gate? Tune in to next month's PlayStation Pro for the first full review of the Pal version.

Release Date: May



One for the ladies, that includes you Nicola Main from Tadcaster, Heaven's Gate boasts a whopping three woman fighters out of a total of eight. Beat 'em-ups as a rule only include a single lass or, at most, two if the development team's art department is feeling particularly right on

It isn't packed with loads of identical games. Oh no

As mentioned, Heaven's Gate features three female fighters. The other five consist of a large bear with a strange nose, a knife wielding sado-masochist, Adam Ant and Buster Bloodvessel's secret love child and two Ryu/Ken types – one of whom is armed with two small forearm truncheons



PLAYER SELECT



Heaven's Gate borrows elements from just about every beat 'em-up you've ever heard of. The gameplay style is a cross between Tekken, Toshinden and Star Gladiator, the characters wouldn't look out of place in any other 3-D versus beat 'em-up and the animation is very much out of the Soul Blade school

STAGE 1

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KO



The option screen offers all sorts of potential configurations. There's a life gauge, an enemy level (both handicap systems), sound type, sound effects test and music test (the latter two aren't some kind of exams so don't be put off) to mention but five. An interesting one which I haven't come across before is the see character use per cent where you can find out who proves to be the most popular pugilist

PLAYER SELECT



As well as the usual life gauge which deteriorates every time you're hit, there's a power bar for both contenders in any given fight. When the power bar reaches its zenith, tapping triangle, circle and square simultaneously powers up your character so every blow that connects causes more damage to your opponent than normal

Game Title **Actua Soccer Club Edition**

Software House **Gremlin** If Actua Soccer Club Edition was a song, it would be Inbetw

By Alex Lee

Inbetw

ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION (ASCE) IS an updated version of Actua Soccer, last year's benchmark footy simulation. Actua Soccer 2, effectively Actua 3, which is featured in the News section, is out this winter. Confused?

You will be.

Ever since Aston Villa last won the league, gamers have been crying out for a football game that combines realism and gameplay in just the right proportions. The utterly playable Sensible Soccer – Amiga version – was about as realistic as Newcastle's chances against Monaco, whereas multi-format World Cup USA '94 looked the part but didn't have the gameplay to match.

ASCE's players not only move realistically, they run into space, close down the opposition and generally have surprisingly good positional sense. The only thing left out is a convincing celebratory scene. Every goal is followed by five of the scoring side entering the penalty area, facing the crowd and doing a communal 'one-nil one-nil' gesture.

After a goal flies in, five different replay speeds and countless angles are available and the action can be frozen at any point. Replays can be called up at any time, so there should never be a contentious issue again. Formations, referee abilities and offsides are just three of the options available before entering the packed, atmospheric cauldrons that don't need a single steward to keep in order, let alone a load of heavy-handed coppers. Just before kick-off is the best time to fiddle around with the view angle and distance using the L2 and R2 buttons.

ASCE's control system is one of its many praiseworthy features. All four buttons are used, with one each for shoot/slide tackle, pass, sprint/select player and lock player. All of these can be configured to suit individual preferences.

After touch – ball swerve – can be applied with either the D-pad or L1 and R1. Where some footy games have power bars when shooting, ASCE relies on a finer touch. Pulling back on the D pad when shooting causes the ball to rise, whereas pushing forward guarantees a skidding grass cutter. Shooting, as in proper footy, is one of ASCE's toughest tasks – composure in front of goal is a must.

Mastering the rebound follow-up shot separates the men from the boys – the Shearers among us take pride in casually running the ball over the line, whereas the Yeboahs blast wide. There's no optimum angle to speak of either.

Whipping the ball over from the wing causes mayhem. Headers go flying in, strikers attempt overhead kicks and sometimes the central defenders manage to head the ball away to safety.

One downer is that the nets haven't received the same painstaking attention as the pitches, the players and the stadia. My theory is that this is the case so as to allow behind-the-goal action replays to be enjoyed to the full.

League and cup competitions are memory card-saveable and there's always the chance of a cup upset. Yep, even the glorious unpredictability of footy is encapsulated in ASCE.

Sounds familiar? That's because it's basically the same game as the first Actua Soccer, except with English Premier League sides. It's a stop-gap release to maintain consumer awareness before Actua 2 hits the shelves next season. Find out whether it's buyable in its own right, or left looking a bit statuesque, when it's reviewed in full next month.

Release Date: May



Although these in-game screenshots aren't sufficiently close up to show it, the strips are exact replicas of the latest ones, even down to individual clubs' sponsorships. Each side has a home and away kit, so there are never any awkward colour clashes when you play, regardless of which sides you select

weener by Sleeper. Now find out why...

weener

Team Select:

Wimbledon 95/96 Season Stats

Final Position: 10th
 League Record: 15W 12D 15L
 Points: 51
 Goals Scored: 40
 Goals Conceded: 40
 Biggest Win: 3-0 vs QPR
 Biggest Defeat: 0-4 vs Arsenal
 Current League Position: 10th

Chairman: D.C. Richards
Manager: David Pleat
Assistant Manager: Danny Bergara
Home Strip: Blue and white striped shirts with yellow trim, blue socks with white and yellow tops.
Away Strip: Green shirt with navy pattern and collar, white shorts with green trim, white socks with green and black trim.

Sponsor: Sanderson
Kit Supplier: Puma

FA Cup Winners: 1896, 1907, 1935
League Cup Winners: 1991
Charity Shield Winners: 1995

10-YEAR RECORD

Final Pos	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Points	13	17	33	42	43	62						

Player Stats



Match Statistics



Gameplay-wise, there haven't been any dramatic changes made to last year's effort. The pace is slightly faster, if anything, and the odd bugs that appeared in the original have been erased; such as the camera angle freaking out when a substitution is made immediately before half time, or whatever it was

To illustrate how unpredictable footballers' careers can be, the players used for motion capturing – Chris Woods, Graham Hyde and Andy Sinton – were all Sheffield Wednesday regulars. Woods is now Southampton's third-choice 'keeper, Hyde is, well, hiding and Sinton is now at Tottenham Hotspur where he's a regular in the side after having spent months on the sidelines injured

Original commentator, BBC's Barry Davies, has been signed up once more to provide interactive commentary. In a nutshell, this means he's had to sit in a studio yelling out hundreds of players' names in three varying states of excitement. Can't be bad – rumour has it he got paid 10 grand

Actua Soccer Club Edition's art team had a pleasant surprise when they realised Southampton is sponsored by the same firm who pay for its name to go on Sheffield Wednesday's shirts. Instead of having to draw a new sponsorship logo, they simply cut and pasted Wednesday's onto Southampton's kit. The sponsor, incidentally, is Sanderson

Game Title **Darklight Conflict**

Software House **EA** *Rage Software is really busy right now. This time Electronic Arts is*

Spaced Out

By Andy Sharp

THE UNIVERSE HAS OFFERED A whole host of weird goings on over the years, from the warriors of the Alien Trilogy to Luke Skywalker and ET. Most of the games are usually set in the future when mankind has colonised planets and has some pretty ruddy impressive technology.

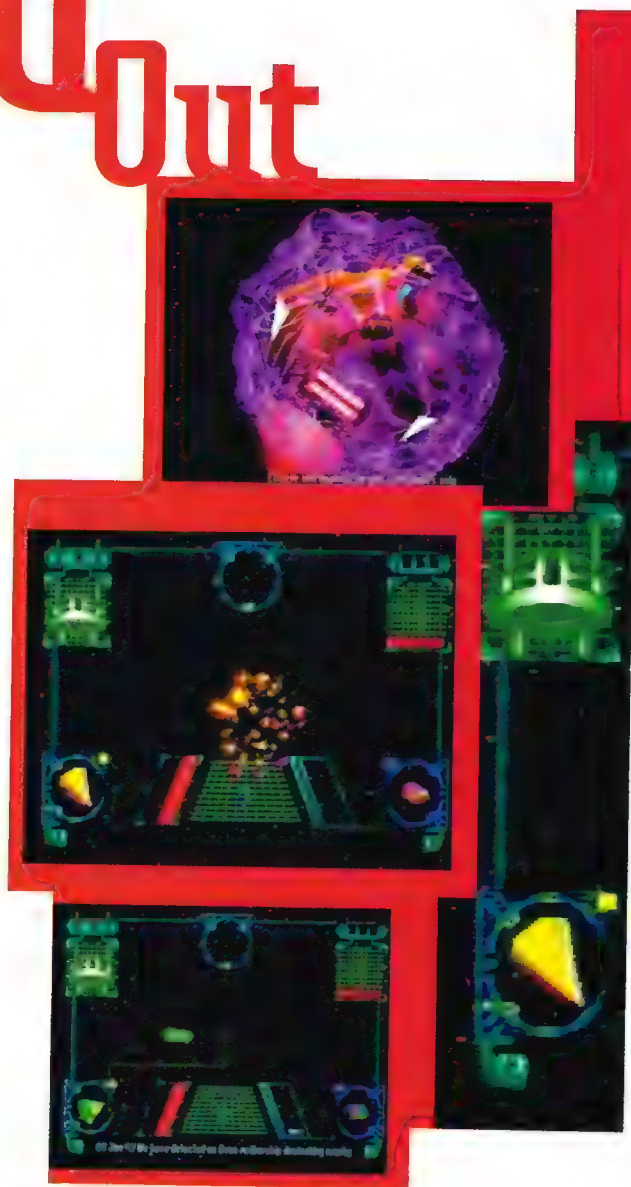
So it will come as no surprise to learn that Darklight is set in the universe some time in the future. You have been genetically altered by the Space Senate Provision to be exchanged in a deal with the Reptons. Quite why this has been done is confusing, but it seems to have something to do with putting you into their society to facilitate future communications between the races.

Unfortunately for you, the Reptons are a fickle bunch and the different clans are feuding. This is where you come into the proceedings. You must do battle in the furthest regions of space in a universe with two suns. The shadows on your ship take this into account and the suns light the universe in a way which is unique and supposed to look like nothing before released.

There are over 50 missions the player can progress through and on top of all this you must learn the military strategies of the Reptons as well as rescue damaged crafts and utilise the resources of your wingmen.

The inspiration behind Darklight has come from PC games such as Tie Fighter and X-Wing and it bears a horrifying resemblance to the old classic Elite. No doubt it will appeal to many fans of this kind of game and, with over 18 months in the development stage, it could be exactly what the PlayStation has been crying out for.

Release Date: May



Whilst in development it was decided to include a unique lens flare effect when you are flying close to the suns. This looks pretty impressive but doesn't really add anything to the game – purely cosmetic

responsible for handling the release of this space strategy saga

Some missions will take you through space portals which transport you into a new area where you will be met by hordes of enemy resistance. Thankfully your ships are generally highly manoeuvrable and blasting the critters is made a little simpler because of this. As you shoot your way through the missions you will be called upon to fly a whole manner of crafts which all handle in different ways



There are three different views to choose from. Two exterior views and one from inside the ship's cockpit where you have easy access to the radar to locate the targets and space portals. There is also a more detailed map when you press Start which shows exactly which way you are heading and how far away you are from your destination



Darklight is definitely aimed at strategy fans everywhere and therefore has a limited, but rigid, base which should guarantee its success. Shoot 'em-up fans will enjoy the blasting sections but may not be too impressed with the strategy required to tackle the missions

Whether Darklight will be as impressive as we all hope is a question we will strive to answer in the near future when we give it review treatment. Originally penned in for a March release, it has slipped slightly but should be reviewable any day now

Game Title **Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo**

Software House **Virgin** Capcom would be a natural to run a dairy with the amount of

Quick Thinking!

By **Steve McNally**

YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR accusing Capcom of some serious over-use of the Street Fighter name, but then when you think that it is only satisfying a seemingly insatiable public thirst, is it really fair to criticise? Anyway, if you read one of our more unscrupulous competitors who are quite prepared to proffer an opinion on some dodgy import copy of a game that they don't fully understand because it's all in Japanese, chances are you'll already have seen this reviewed.

There's an equally good chance that the review in question lavished praise on it. I personally can't remember a puzzle game since Lemmings 2 being this eagerly anticipated because, let's face it, they rarely set the gaming world alight. Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo looks like it could be a little different.

This irresistible and addictive game of fast paced strategy combines elements of Street Fighter and Darkstalkers in what will be hopefully one of the most compelling puzzle games ever created. One or two players will have the chance to do battle in a fiercely competitive, head-to-head challenge that's totally outrageous. Opponents compete by stacking gem after gem in strategic patterns and colour combinations (making it more like Columns than Tetris really). When special Crash Gems drop and are positioned to break the gems on one side of the screen, more gems are sent to descend on the weary foe. With combination and counter attacks, it's a fast paced, back and forth contest until one side is overwhelmed in a final KO.

Players' favourite characters from Street Fighter, Alpha 2 and Darkstalkers, are featured in this war for puzzle supremacy. Adding a humorous element, young versions of the classic characters act out the fight in the background as the players battle with the blocks. As characters' wild super combos erupt and players' egos are on the line, matches of Super Puzzle Fighter matches escalate into free-for-all for puzzle dominance and make multi player games some of the most enjoyable you'll ever come across.

In may not look much but in gameplay terms this is going to be fantastic. And let's face it, sad though it may be, it's still probably the best looking puzzler on the PlayStation give or take the Lost Vikings.

Release Date: May



It may not be cool or trendy to admit to liking puzzle games but you rarely come across someone who doesn't. Especially if they have a two player option which, thankfully, this one does. Add the attraction of the Street Fighter characters battling it out in the background using real moves from the games and it's hard to see this game not striking a chord with fans of both beat 'em-ups and puzzle games alike



milking practise it has got from the Street Fighter name!

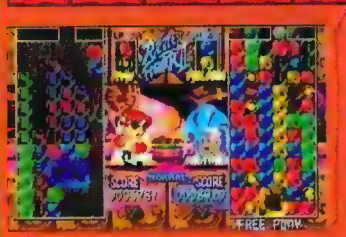
The characters' special moves are triggered depending on how well you are doing. The more blocks of the same colour you manage to get into contact with each other, the more spectacular the special move pulled off in the background will be. A round is won by causing your Street Fighter kid to beat his opponent to a pulp. Nice one



It's actually quite a bit more complicated than say, Columns for example, with loads of bonus type items and different ways of scoring big points (and therefore big hits). Most of the combinations are discovered through trial and error but, to be honest, that's all part of the fun



Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo should be guaranteed decent sales because of the review scores it has already and the ones it will almost certainly get in the future. However, whatever marks it may get in the magazines, I still can't see it doing well enough to persuade Capcom that it warrants even one sequel (unlike its beat 'em-up cousins). Enjoy it while you can kids!



How To Win At Twisted Metal 2

It's the greatest two player road rage shoot 'em-up in the history of the world, and we know you're just gagging for a complete strategy guide. So here it is. All the special moves, when to use them, where to use them and who to use them with. It's a festival of fear and we are the ringleaders

GENERAL STRATEGY



The best advanced attacks to use are Ice (L, R, U) Napalm (R, L, U) and Shield (U, U, R). Ice is used to stop your opponent and set them up for another attack, like your special attack. That's the first basic combo, since anyone can do it.

Napalm explodes on impact and spreads fire. The impact is pretty powerful and the flames constantly drain a car's energy.

This can be stopped with a dip

into water or using your shield. This stops all damage against you for a few seconds. Large characters can easily be punished by napalm shots. Just stand right next to them, release the napalm and it will hit them on the way up.

The Mine (R, L, D) can be useful in tunnels or narrow spaces (Amazon, Hong Kong) or in places where you know enemy cars will go (landing places from warps in Paris and Antarctica). They are also good for enemies on your tail. You can try to drop them near the edges of cliffs, but enemies probably won't hit them since mines disappear after a while.

Rear Attack (L, R, D) sends your highlighted weapon shooting out behind you. Unless you have a good homing weapon, you could easily miss.

Jump (U, U, L) is more of a utility than a weapon, although you can get out of some bad situations with jump and turbo, since it doesn't use as much attack energy as a shield.

Invisibility (R, D, L, U) is utterly useless and best ignored, unless you fancy doing it during two player matches to freak people out.



AMBUSH TACTICS

There are certain areas where any car can effectively destroy most opponents with little risk to themselves. These are ambush points. Always destroy Spectre first to avoid getting knocked out of place and watch for Warthog and his long-range missiles. Generally, cliffs, tunnels and teleporters are the ideal places.

LOS ANGELES

Useless against the CPU, but helpful in two player battles. You can hide in smoking buildings and attack while your enemy puzzles as to where you are. Also, make good use of the lightning generator by luring enemies towards it and then turbo away while frying them.

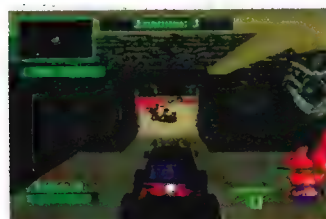
MOSCOW

The open plan of this level makes ambushes difficult. Stay on one of the bridges with power missiles loaded and wait for someone to jump over towards you. Let rip and drop them out of the sky. Just make sure you watch your back. Alternatively, drop a remote on the centre spot and destroy all the bridges at once.



PARIS

There are three good ambush areas in Paris. First is the Louvre (the building at the end of the street facing the Eiffel tower). Enemies will teleport up and drive right off the edge, making easy targets. Also, you can do it in the Eiffel Tower before it gets blown to smithereens. Lastly, use the very narrow diagonal side streets as perfect ambush points.



AMAZONIA

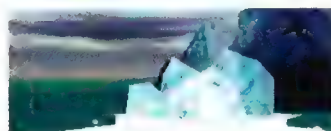
Get some remote bombs and power missiles and hide in the tunnel or a temple with a small opening. In the tunnel you can drop the remote at the opening or use mines and then follow up with napalm and missiles. In the temples, set the remote in front of the entrance and manoeuvre to the side so that the

polygons disappear and you can see outside. These tactics are perfect against Minion.



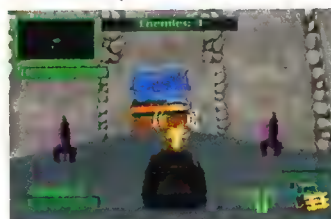
NEW YORK

The teleporter that ends up on top of the green glass building is perfect. Park yourself so that your back is to a barricade and ice and ram/ricochet anyone who goes up. A more risky spot is the swimming pool. Drop a remote bomb (found in the locker room) right where the cars fall and blast them with your special.



ANTARCTICA

The epitome of the perfect ambush is the teleport to the small island. There you can find ricochet bombs that can be fired on cars exiting the warp. One well positioned bomb will put any car into the icy ocean. Plus, the rest of the level will disintegrate while you wait patiently on the solid island.



HOLLAND

Holland has few places to hide. You can use the windmills as bases, but they are quickly demolished by the enemy cars. You can use the tall crops if you are using a small vehicle, playing two player and the radar is turned off.

HONG KONG

This level is like a cross between Amazonia and New York. The subway tunnels act like the Amazon tunnels, the teleporter in the temple is like the glass building in NY and the small side street next to the harbour can be used as a cliff if you have a pop-up weapon.

AXEL

One of the new characters, Axel, is the big guy stuck between two huge wheels. He is a good all-round large character. His special damages everyone around him and makes them jump into the air, incapacitating them. Unfortunately his low speed and large size make him an easy target.

Strategy as:

If there is a group of cars smashing each other, turbo past them and release your special attack to damage most of the enemies. Also try ramming the centre of the pack and then using the special repeatedly. The cars won't be able to escape fast enough to avoid all the attacks. When



you freeze someone, drive up and stop right next to them. Use your special to pop them up and strike them with Napalm or press R, L, U if you don't have any.

This can be followed up with a ricochet bomb, ram and another freeze for a very damaging push-back combo. If you use this on a human player, they will probably have enough time to shield themselves. Use your special as a substitute for mines. Wait on an edge in New York for an enemy to come screaming towards you, activate your shield to prevent icing, and use your special as they come towards you. Try to park in front of a barricade in case the other car uses bombs. In a tunnel, the bouncing effect causes even more damage.

Strategy against:

In case you didn't notice, every CPU controlled character does something you would never be able to do. Axel uses his special attack multiple times, sometimes three or four. Keep your distance and use anything you can that doesn't require you to get close (ice, napalm, homing missiles). If you do get trapped, immediately use shield and turbo away.

MR. GRIMM

Mr. Grimm is the small ghoul riding the fast motorcycle. His special weapon is probably the most powerful in the game. It is quite large, moves quickly and can take off nearly 40-50 per cent of a life bar. Another good thing is that it won't remove the ice from a trapped car. It doesn't home in on enemies, so make sure you have a clean shot. Mr. Grimm's downfall is his lack of armour, but a shield is all you need. If you want to beat the game quickly, Mr. Grimm is probably your best choice.

Strategy as:

Since the special doesn't freeze opponents, use it often to destroy your opponents. Run away and wait until you get another special and hunt down your next victim. He can be very powerful in Paris and Hong Kong where you can lose your opponents in the winding streets. Similar to mines, you can wait at a warp point (especially in the Louvre at Paris) and ambush your enemies. ▶

► If the Eiffel Tower hasn't fallen, almost nobody can hurt you if you wait on the Louvre's roof.

Strategy against:

Mr. Grimm is probably the most brutal of all the CPU characters. Never drive behind or head-on when facing him, because he can only shoot his special straight. He is so small that any car can ram him and cause major damage. If you can ram his side, he can get knocked over, follow this with ice and your choice of attacks.



MR. SLAM

A new character, Mr. Slam is a huge bulldozer with an even larger pair of chompers used for slamming your enemy multiple times. He's quite powerful since he has a strong special attack and thick armour. Unfortunately, he is extremely large and moves slowly, making him a sitting duck.

Strategy as:

A great CPU killer is to load up on weapons and grab a car. Use everything you have (napalm, power, homers) and re-ice or ram and repeat. Cars are totally vulnerable when you slam them; they can't use a shield and they get turned sideways. Also try driving against a wall for more damage. Mr. Slam can be brutal on the cliff levels. Even if an enemy puts up a shield, you can turbo-ram them right off the edge. Just be careful you don't drive off the



edge, too. Nothing is more fun than picking

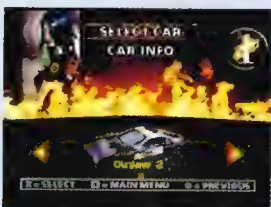
up a vehicle and using it as a shield! This is extremely helpful in Holland. All you have to do is pick someone up and the CPU characters will blast the car, trying to get at you.

Strategy against:

Mr. Slam is one of those characters that just loves to ice you to death. Whenever he's at far to mid range, he will continually shoot ice, missiles and bullets. Either stay close or stay away. He shouldn't be too hard to take down with ice. Oddly, sometimes he will ice you and move in for the kill but turn away at the last moment. Capitalise on this.

OUTLAW-2

Outlaw-2 is slightly different from the TM1 incarnation. The taser special now pops the enemy up in the air and can be used like Axel's special. Remember that it damages when you first hit and when it shuts off. Outlaw's speed makes ramming a breeze, but the bad handling plus the speed make her tricky to use on levels like New York.



Strategy as:

Outlaw plays very similar to Axel: You can drive by a group of cars and use your special or pop someone up to napalm them or set them up for a combo. Similarly, you can wait by an edge, use the taser and the enemy will fly right off the edge. Position yourself next to a building or a wall in the course. When an enemy comes at you, use the special and the enemy will bounce along the wall, racking up damage.

Strategy against:

Outlaw tends to be the last person on the course because she is difficult to approach. Treat her like Axel and you should be safe. Keep a safe distance and use homing missiles and remote bombs to wear her energy down. Once she's more vulnerable, try ramming her, as her armour is pretty feeble.

HAMMERHEAD

This rather large monster truck has not changed from TM1. He's still a great up-close fighter, good for ramming and driving over opponents with his special. Since it is automatic, you can't miss, letting you concentrate on other attacks. For such a large vehicle, Hammerhead has light armour.

Strategy as:

Whenever you drive over an enemy, drop a mine for extra damage.

Strategy against:

Hammerhead is fairly easy to beat. No strategies are really needed, just avoid his ice.



WARTHOG

Warthog is slightly different from TM1. His triple missile special turns into fireballs if the missiles stay in the air long enough. Plus his armour makes him somewhat difficult to destroy. His only real problem is his turning ability.

Strategy as:

Practise using the special to find out the magic range when the missiles turn into powerful fireballs. Then in battle, ice someone, back up and shoot Napalm, back up some more and use the special. Turbo helps in getting to the right distance quickly.



Strategy against:

Because of his good speed and armour he is sometimes a tough customer to beat. Like many of the other drivers, try not to tail him and especially avoid head on confrontations. His speed and armour create the perfect ramming machine. He doesn't ice excessively, so you won't need to worry about that.

SHADOW

Another new guy, Shadow takes a little bit of practice to use effectively. His special attack acts much like a cross between a ricochet and a remote bomb – it hugs the ground as it travels and damages everyone around it when it explodes. Make sure you never detonate it too close to yourself. It is very damaging and useful for large groups of cars.

Strategy as:

Since the special can't be fired rapidly, you'll need some good combos. Try freezing someone, shooting a special quickly followed by a napalm blast and some more ice. Or, begin by freezing and planting a remote bomb, back off and do the special/napalm attack. Since it pops enemies in the air, use the special as a substitute for mine attacks in cliffs and tunnels. Just remember to stay clear. Always look for unusual shots, especially in two player mode. Since the attack is small and dark, it



can be a deadly surprise in Holland or on dark coloured rooftops.

Strategy against:

Like Mr. Grimm, avoid trailing or facing Shadow head on. He's too eager to blast you away. Going for his side is easy because of his average speed, handling and the length of his frame.

THUMPER

Thumper is a very strong contender, his speed and special are quite good. If you can ice an enemy, his special can take off even more energy than Mr. Grimm's special as the car catches fire for extra damage.

Strategy as:

Thumper's special is quite straightforward. Just ice an enemy and use your special to eat away their energy bar.

Strategy against:

Whatever you do, don't get too close to him or you'll eat flames. He also loves to use rear napalm and rear special attacks. Ice will douse his flames in no time.



ROADKILL

Roadkill has changed quite a bit from TM1. His special is now a boomerang that becomes extremely powerful on its return trip and can take about a third off a life bar. Another good plus is that if the boomerang makes its way back to the car, it will go back into the special move stockpile, so you can use it repeatedly.

Strategy as:

Above all else, practise using the special on a nice flat course so you can find out it's range, like with Warthog. Since you can fire the boomerangs quickly, you can kill opponents with three well timed blasts.

Strategy against:

Roadkill can be the most devastating opponent because he has no problems with repeatedly freezing you at point blank range. Hit and run tactics are very helpful.



SPECTRE

His special missiles are very handy since they pass through obstacles, but his armour is so weak that you'll need them often to get out of jams. They also knock a person slightly backwards, interrupting whatever they were doing, which is very handy if someone is lining up a homing missile on you or some similar shenanigans.

Strategy as:

Make use of the fact that his special can pass through buildings. Secrete yourself somewhere safe and keep an eye on the radar. Pick off anyone silly enough to drive nearby. Definitely a long distance vehicle, as you can get a kill without ever seeing the other car.

Strategy against:

Spectre is one of the most annoying CPU characters in the game. Always take him out first to keep him from disrupting attacks on other people. Since his armour is so weak, any type of frontal assault will demolish him quickly.



SWEET TOOTH

U, L1, Tri, R on character select screen.

Sweet Tooth is the semi hidden ice cream truck. Anybody who can beat the game with this vehicle deserves an award. He's slow, huge, has a weak special, plus you don't get any passwords (you have to beat the game without continuing!). Also, he seems to roll over excessively when he gets hit. In addition, his special wavers up and down, sometimes allowing small cars to completely avoid damage. Only use him if you want a real challenge.

Strategy as:

The only good thing about him is that his special knocks enemies back a little and it recharges quickly.

Strategy against:

Probably the second most difficult CPU character to beat, he uses his special constantly. Fortunately, his big frame makes him an easy target from far away.



MINION

L1, U, D, L on character select screen.

Definitely the strongest contender, Minion plays like a cross between Warthog and Hammerhead with some speed added in. His special is like Warthog's with an ice attack, and he is so large that he can roll over any enemy with ease. Plus his special builds up quickly. You'll have trouble convincing your friends to let you play as him, but he is obviously the most powerful car in the game.

Strategy as:

A simple special combined with a ram should take any car to at least 50 per cent health or less.

Strategy against:

Since you face Minion on the Amazonia course, use the ambush points and remote bombs to their fullest. Note: Hammerhead can't usually drive over Minion. Try jumping to get on top.



GRASSHOPPER

Probably the hardest vehicle to use against the CPU, Grasshopper looks suspiciously like Pit Viper from TM1, but the special is quite different. This is Grasshopper's only strong point, her weak armour and mediocre speed make her hard to use for anything useful.

Strategy as:

Don't pick her. She's arse.

Strategy against:

Grasshopper can be a nightmare if she's right next to you, so keep a little distance. If she does her special, drive backwards and hit her with anything. Napalm usually works



well. Avoid her rear ice and pummel her whenever she's on the ground.

TWISTER

The last new challenger, F-1 type Twister has a devastating special attack, but her armour is so weak that she often takes lots of damage during it. This is her only downfall. That, and open spaces.

Strategy as:

Much like area specials, (Axel, Outlaw) you can use your special at ambush points for easy kills. Don't forget to use your shield. You might think that the enemies



swirling above you are getting plenty of damage, but to maximise this do the special near buildings and add plenty of Napalm and missiles. Sometimes you can kill enemies in one special combo!

Strategy against:

Keep your distance. The best times to hit her is when she does her special - the car gets flipped up and can't move as fast - and after a knock-back attack (mines, ricochet, remote).

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2 EXTREME.....32.99	3D LEMMINGS.....35.99	ABSOLUTE SOCCER.....38.99	Actua Soccer.....37.99	Agile Warrior.....32.99	ANDRETTI RACING.....34.99	AIR COMBAT.....18.99	Alien Trilogy.....34.99	Alone in Dark-Jack is Back.....27.99	AREA 51.....33.99	ATARI'S GREATEST HITS.....28.99	BALL BLAZER CHAMPIONS.....34.99	Batman Forever.....34.99	BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN.....18.99	BATTLE STATIONS.....34.99	Beetlemania.....33.99	BLACK DAWN.....29.99	Blam! Machine Head.....36.99	BLAZING DRAGON.....29.99	Breakpoint Tennis.....32.99	Broken Helix.....36.99	Bubble Bobble 2.....34.99	Bubble Bobble/Rainbow Island.....23.99	BUSSY 3D.....28.99	BUST A MOVE 2 THE ARCADE.....24.99	Casper.....34.99	Cheesy.....35.99	COMMAND & CONQUER.....32.99	CONTRA.....36.99	Crusader No Remorse.....33.99	Crypt Killer.....36.99	Cyberia.....32.99	DARK FORCES.....29.99	Dark Stalkers.....34.99	Davis Cup Tennis.....32.99	Dawn of Darkness.....33.99	DEATHDROME.....34.99	Descent 2.....32.99	DESTRUCTION DERBY.....18.99	Die Hard Trilogy.....34.99	Discworld.....34.99	Disruptor.....34.99	Dragonheart Fire & Steel.....34.99	Doom.....34.99	Dungeon Keeper.....34.99	Earthworm Jim 2.....32.99	EXCALIBUR.....38.99	EXHUMED.....37.99	Extreme Pinball.....34.99	FADE TO BLACK.....34.99	FIFA 97.....34.99	FINAL DOOM.....33.99	FIRO & KLAUD.....29.99	FOOTBALL MANAGER.....31.99	Gex.....29.99	GRID RUN.....34.99	GUNSHIP 2000.....32.99	Harcourt 4x4.....29.99	Heavy Heat (Big Red).....31.99	Hexen.....33.99	Hi-Octane.....37.99	IRON BLOOD.....34.99	HYPER MATCH FOUR TENNIS.....32.99	IMPACT RACING.....32.99	Incredible Hulk.....36.99	INDEPENDENCE DAY.....36.99	Int. Superstar Soccer Deluxe.....36.99	International Track & Field.....32.99	Iron & Blood.....34.99	Killing Zone.....26.99	Konami Open Golf.....34.99	Legacy Of Kain.....32.99	LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE.....36.99	Loaded.....39.99	LOST VIKINGS 2.....32.99	MADDER NFL '97.....32.99	Magic Carpet+Hidden Worlds.....37.99	Mass Destruction.....29.99	Megaman X3.....34.99	MICRO MACHINES III.....39.99	MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY.....33.99	Moto X.....34.99	MTV Aeon Flux.....34.99	NASCAR RACING 96.....38.99	NBA 96.....37.99	NBA Hangtime.....37.99	NBA In The Zone 2.....37.99	NBA Live 97.....36.99	NFL.....37.99	NFL Quarterback Club 97.....37.99	NHL 97.....36.99	NHL FACE OFF 97.....32.99	NHL Open Ice.....33.99	Ninja.....36.99	Olympic Games.....37.99	Olympic Soccer.....37.99	Onside.....34.99	Pandemonium.....32.99	Panzer General.....30.99	Paradise.....36.99	PERFECT WEAPON.....36.99	PFA Soccer.....32.99	Philosoma.....31.99	PLAYER MANAGER 2.....38.99	Powerplay Hockey '96.....34.99	Powerserve.....24.99	PGA 96.....37.99	PGA TOUR GOLF '97.....31.99	PROJECT OVERKILL.....34.99	PRO PINBALL.....32.99	Gex.....29.99	Psychic Detect ve.....37.99	Psychic Force.....34.99	Quest for Fame.....34.99	Rayman.....29.99	Re Loaded.....29.99	Resident Evil.....35.99	Revelation X.....33.99	RIDGE RACER.....18.99	Rise of the Robots II.....37.99	Road Rage.....36.99	Road Rash.....37.99	ROBOTRON X.....33.99	SAMPRAS XTREME TENNIS.....32.99	SHELLSHOCK.....34.99	Shockwave Assault.....16.99	SIM CITY 2000.....34.99	SKELETON WARRIORS.....34.99	SLAM N JAM '96.....32.99	SOCCER 97.....38.99	SOVIET STRIKE.....34.99	Space Hulk VOTBA.....34.99	SPIDER.....34.99	SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD.....34.99	STAR GLADIATOR.....32.99	STARFIGHTER 3000.....32.99	Street Fighter Alpha 2.....32.99	STREETRACER.....34.99	SWAGMAN.....31.99	SYNDICATE WARS.....34.99	TEMPEST 2000.....26.99	Theme Park.....19.99	Thunderhawk 2.....34.99	TITAN WARS.....24.99	Tomb Raider.....36.99	Tomb Raider 2.....33.99	Ultima.....34.99	ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3.....29.99	VIRTUA COP 2.....38.99	VIRTUA COP 2 + GUN.....52.99	VIRTUAL FIGHTER 2.....29.99	Virtual Golf.....37.99	Virtual Open Tennis.....33.99	World Series Baseball.....29.99	WORMS.....24.99	Wrestlemania at the Arcade.....34.99	WWF In Your House.....34.99	X2 PROJECT.....33.99	X-Men Children Of The Atom.....37.99
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PSX HARDWARE

Comp Pro PS8 Control Pad.....12.99	CYBERPAD.....13.99	Interact PS Arcade SV1101.....41.99	Interact PS Gamepad 8 SV1102.....19.99	Interact PS Superpad SV1103.....16.99	Joyrad A-Joyrad.....29.99	Logic 3 Control Station Pad.....9.99	LOGIC 3 PREDATOR GUN.....27.99	Logic 3 Station Master Pad.....12.99
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SATURN

3D LEMMINGS.....30.99	ACTUA GOLF.....30.99	ALIEN TRILOGY.....42.99	AMOK.....29.99	ANDRETTI RACING.....35.99	Alone in the Dark - Jack is Back.....27.99	AREA 51.....32.99	ATHLETE KINGS.....29.99	BAKU BAKU ANIMAL.....22.99	BATMAN FOREVER COIN OP.....27.99	BEELAM.....32.99	BLACK FIRE.....32.99	BLAM! MACHINE HEAD.....36.99	BLAZING DRAGON.....29.99	BREAKPOINT TENNIS.....32.99	Bubble Bobble/Rainbow Island.....23.99	Bugs.....34.99	BUG 100.....29.99	BUST A MOVE 2: THE ARCADE.....24.99	CASPER.....32.99	Clockwork Knight.....30.99	Clockwork Knight 2.....29.99	COMMAND & CONQUER.....32.99	CRIME WAVE.....32.99	CRITICOM.....32.99	CROW CITY OF ANGELS.....34.99	CRUSADER NO REMORSE.....34.99	CYBERIA.....32.99	DARUS 2.....22.99	DARK SAVIOUR.....29.99	Dawn of Darkness.....33.99	DAYTONA.....39.99	DISCWORLD.....31.99	Defcon 5.....29.99
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SATURN H/WARE

Eclipse Arcade Stick SV462.....25.99	Eclipse Pad SV461.....18.99	Super Pad SV460.....9.99	Logic 3 Explorer Pad J7482.....9.99	LOGIC 3 PREDATOR GUN.....27.99	MEMORY CARD 1 MEG.....14.99	Multiplayer Adaptor.....28.99	QUANTUM PAD.....12.99	Sega Control Pad.....17.99
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You can place an advance order for future releases - credit cards are not charged until day of despatch so reserve your copy today

'...amazing, marvellous, 'My loyalty to your



We shall shortly be publishing readers' reviews, so you can get an idea of what gamers like you really think of games that have been in the shops for a while. We are strongly considering the possibility of bringing out a cover CD edition, but only when we can guarantee that the demos on it are of sufficiently high quality to grace PlayStation Pro and so you won't feel cheated when you've played it.

Dear PlayStation Pro

I would like to thank all the staff who help to make the magazine, with comprehensive and non-biased reviews I can trust before splashing out £40-£50 on a game. I have a few questions concerning future releases for my console. The first concerns Theme Hospital. I enjoyed playing Theme Park on the SNES and I was looking forward to playing God in these strategic and humorous games. Then I read that the game may be scrapped due to the Japanese failing to see the funny side. Have you any more info?

As you stated in issue five, football management games have always proved popular and Premier Manager looks interesting. Do you have any more details on this, or other football management games on the PlayStation? Issue four contained some pictures of Toukon Retsuden 2, the follow-up to Power Move Pro Wrestling. The graphics seemed superb, and with the addition of a four-player mode I shall put this on my list for 1997. Again, do you have any further info, such a UK release date?

My final gaming question relates to another wrestling game – WWF: In Your House by Acclaim. This game was originally scheduled for release in November and I placed an order with Special Reserve to receive it before Christmas. I still haven't got the game – Acclaim has said it has been released, whereas Special Reserve disagree. Could you help me to find out what is going on?

On a more personal note, I will soon be choosing University courses and I was wondering how rewarding a career in journalism is, especially on a gaming magazine, and is the profession too competitive. I would be very grateful if you could answer any of my questions.
Sean O'Kane, Derry, Ireland

Dear PlayStation Pro (or Alex)

I would like to apologise if you are reading this Alex, I was unsure if you would be at work due to the new addition to your family. I have just been reading issue five of your amazing, marvellous, gripping, thrilling read – yes I do mean PlayStation Pro – and I came across the letters page. I think that what you did for Alison Mensforth of Sunderland was very kind and I believe she is genuinely grateful for her gifts. I wrote off to another PlayStation mag several times without a reply, or having my letter printed. I should not say which, but what can they do? Come get me? I don't think so. It was PlayStation.PI**, a thoroughly inferior mag to say the least.

Anyway congratulations on such a reader-friendly mag. Just one question – I read about a game called Tecmo's Deception in an American mag. Will this get a UK release (it's a bit like Resident Evil)? Thanks for reading this. P.S. I only have issues 3-5. Any chance of sending me some back issues?

John Traynor, Leicester

Dear PlayStation Pro

Thanks for your brilliant magazine at such a brilliant price. The first one I bought was the February edition and immediately I was hooked. The free cheat book I got with that issue helped me a lot especially with Destruction Derby.

I was disappointed however, to find that there were no cheats or moves for MK3. I have even gone into newsagents and started flicking through other PlayStation magazines to try and find them but to no avail. So please try to find it in your hearts to print the moves for me.

On a lighter note, I am planning to buy a new game but money is a bit tight. I saw some cheap second hand games in the back of your March edition but didn't know what some of them were like. So to cut a long story short, I was wondering if you have ever thought of using one page of your already packed magazine to do some reviews of old PlayStation games? Thanks for reading my letter. Keep up the good work! P.S. Are you planning to bring out a cover CD edition?

Andrew Nelson, Gifford, Co Down

PRO Tecmo's Home Page on the Internet, which is updated weekly, has no mention of

Tecmo's Deception being scheduled for a British release. As soon as there's any change, we'll let you know. If you'd like some back issues, you'll find an order form at the back of the mag on the Next Month page.

PRO Next month's tips section has a few tips for Mortal Kombat 3 – the mag's out on the third Thursday in May. For reviews of older games, look no further than the Recommended section – these are the only PlayStation games worth shelling out for, particularly if you're a bit short of cash.

PRO You're right about Theme Hospital. The Japanese see hospitals as almost sacred places where people go to be healed and many of them would find such a game offensive. The next football management game

gripping read *mag is established*



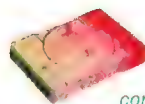
scheduled for release is Championship Manager '97 from Eidos, the company that brought you the excellent Soccer '97. Don't expect to see Power Move Pro Wrestling 2 any earlier than the coming Christmas. We'd know about WWF: In Your House if only Acclaim's PR department would ever answer the 'phone. Try them yourself on 0171 344 5000 and see how you get on. None of the PlayStation Pro team had specific journalistic qualifications when we entered the wonderful world of magazine publishing. Alex, Jay and Steve have since attained degree-equivalent NVQs in Periodical Journalism. A qualification in journalism is useful, therefore, but by no means essential, particularly if you have a good knowledge of the computer games industry and a decent command of the English Language.

Dear PlayStation Pro

I've got Need For Speed, which I think is a class game. You seem to be the only magazine which agrees with me on that account, though. Need For Speed 2's release is ever approaching and I can't wait for you to review it in full but is it markedly different or is it basically the same as the first?

I've got Broken Sword too, which is also class. Is Discworld 2 as good as BS or is it completely different? Also, when will it come out on the PlayStation? Finally, I'm an ex-3DO man. I owned one virtually since its introduction to the UK and was very pleased with it. However, a lack of games and a severe lack of progress forced me to sell up and move on – the PlayStation seemed the obvious choice. I still believe that the 3DO was one of the best consoles available and that it should have given the modern 32 bitters a run for their money but nobody even seems to have heard of it! So why did it fail?

I hope you will be able to help with my queries. As an avid reader who has been with PlayStation Pro since issue two, which was the first time I stumbled upon it, I wondered whether I might be able to purchase a back copy of issue one. If you could inform me of the cost so I could get a copy I would be grateful. I feel I'm missing out if I don't have it to complete my collection. My loyalty to your magazine is now firmly established – yours is the only one to get!



PRO *Need For Speed 2 will be reviewed next issue – in fact we're hoping that it'll be a corker. In a nutshell, it's an enhanced version of the original. Discworld 2, PC-*

style, looks every bit as good as the original and as Discworld was a direct PC port, there's no reason why the sequel shouldn't score highly. Whether it's better than Broken Sword or not is up to individual preference as they are both decent RPGs. Our resident RPG expert, Steve, prefers Broken Sword.

The 3DO failed for too many reasons to go into in a PlayStation mag, but the facts are it was too expensive, not many games were developed for it because of the imminent arrival of the PlayStation and Saturn, and the gaming world was still suspicious of 'next generation' consoles at the time. Let's face it, the Atari Jaguar (remember that?) was 64bit, but a load of rubbish. In the final analysis, all consoles depend on the availability of quality software for their success.

The 3DO, decent enough as it was, just never got the support it may have got had the PlayStation and the Saturn not been just around the corner. Another factor is that the 16bit market was still fairly active, with people loathe to shell out big bucks for a new, unproved system when there was still a healthy amount of cheap software for their system available.

If you were a software publisher and you had the chance to develop for Sony or Sega, with their large advertising and promotions budgets, you'd probably hang on rather than jump onto the Philips cramped, quiet bandwagon which was never hyped up fully by anyone – including the specialist press.

Dear PlayStation Pro

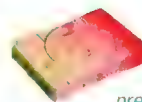
I must start by echoing all the praise heaped on your class magazine by all your many correspondents in previous issues. I just know that when my copy arrives through the door I'll find nothing but top info, top reviews and top tips! As the team are obviously the people in the know when it comes to anything PS, I know my queries are going to the right place.

Firstly, what is the equivalent cost of a game in Japan? I find it hard to believe that we Brits aren't being asked to pay more than we should, especially for older titles. Secondly, can two PlayStations be linked via modems? I ask as I'd like to play games with a friend of mine in Birmingham (Doom just isn't the same on your own). Finally, I'd love to find out why there is such a lack of 'older person' oriented puzzle games for the PS. I'm 27 and Bust-A-Move 2, Bubble Bobble and Hebereke's Popiotto are just not challenging at my age. Do the software

houses think that all people want to do is drive, play sports or beat the shit out of someone?

I think it's about time we had something to test the mind, not just the reflexes. Something a bit more stimulating (but not much) would be Tetris yet I hear Jaleco isn't going to release it in the UK – is this true? I hop you can answer my queries. Keep up the excellent work.

Davie Foster, Dundee



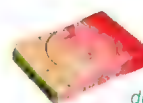
PRO *Prices vary in Japan, but you're right in assuming they're generally cheaper. At present, there's no way you can play linked-up PlayStation games via a modem, but there's every chance that the PlayStation II – due out in 1999 – will have the capability. We agree with your sentiments regarding the 'kiddy' nature of puzzle games for the PlayStation, although the odd cerebral challenge is gradually appearing.*

Arcade adventure style games such as Tomb Raider, Resident Evil and Excalibur 2555 all required a little brain as well as brawn, as do some of the tougher RPGs such as Myst and City Of The Lost Children. It's unlikely, however, that there'll ever be a truly taxing release on the PlayStation as it is after all primarily an arcade-perfect console better suited to all-action games.

Dear PlayStation Pro

I have recently bought a PlayStation and two things occurred to me. Firstly, why are PlayStations so expensive? Secondly, I've heard that the PlayStation sequel is on its way. Does that mean our PlayStations will be obsolete soon? I hope that you will be able to answer my questions. Keep up the excellent work, I think your magazine is the best PlayStation magazine around. Do you have any cheats or tips for Total NBA 96 please? Thanks.

Pascal Avey, Wisbech



PRO *You bought your PlayStation at just the wrong time. As you'll know by now they're down to £129.99. Don't worry about your PlayStation becoming obsolete – software should still be being produced for it well into the 2000s, even though the PlayStation II is due for release before the decade's out. Last issue's free book contained hints and tips on Total NBA 96 – which you've also probably seen. You're a victim of your own enthusiasm, Pascal, but don't let it get you down.*

PLAYSTATION PRO

RECOMMENDS

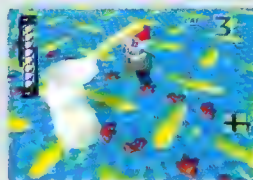
Let's face it, you only buy this magazine because you want our professional opinion of the many and varied pieces of software currently on sale. So with that in mind, we've knocked up a revised edition of our 'Recommended' list, giving you our honest opinion on the top five titles from each genre. They may not be everyone's choice but, as we said earlier, these are *our* favourites and the ones we play the most. And remember, don't buy a game without checking it out in here first!

RACING



F1

The technical Formula 1 japes from Psygnosis just about came out on top of a tough category. This is as realistic as they come, especially with Murray Walker commentating.



MICRO MACHINES V3

Miniature car fun from the boys at Codemasters offers gamers probably the best multi-player racing experience to date, plus there's around 40 tracks to master too. A classic.



DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

The stunning stock car extravaganza returns in this vastly-improved remix of the somewhat-slow original. Huge ramps and much faster in-car action makes this a winner.



WIPEOUT 2097

This futuristic hyper-fast g-force nose-bleeder certainly has the best game soundtrack to date. Take tight bends at high speed with the Prodigy blasting out of the stereo at full volume!

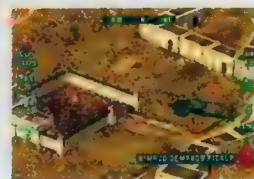


RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Ridge Racer's older brother only offers one track, but it's still a reasonable racer in our book. Expect a big entry from the fabulous Ridge Racer in next month's chart.

Also recommended:
MONSTER TRUCKS
BURNING ROAD
ANDRETTI RACING
MOTOR TOON GP 2
THE NEED FOR SPEED
WIPEOUT

SHOOT 'EM-UP



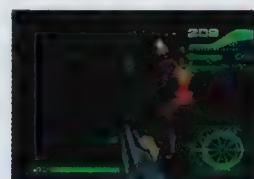
SOVIET STRIKE

Kill Russian terrorists with the aid of a huge chopper in Electronic Arts' excellent update of the old 16bit fave. Plenty of FMV and trigger pounding action guaranteed!



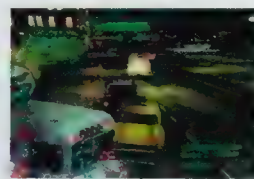
FINAL DOOM

GT Interactive take Doom into the garage for a quick tune up comprising of bigger levels, extra blood and numerous other tweaks and touch-ups. The definitive Doom, if you like.



ALIEN TRILOGY

Shoot acid-oozing xenomorphs for a daft laugh in this atmospheric adventure from Acclaim. And it's a genuinely spooky experience if playing it on your own too.



TWISTED METAL 2

The original had a few teething problems, but this remix of the two player drive-by shooting wheeze more than makes up for it. Destructive, enjoyable and very very addictive.



DARK FORCES

LucasArts jump on the current Star Wars hype-machine with this, admittedly excellent, Jedi Knight Doom clone. The force could have been stronger with this one, but it'll do for now.

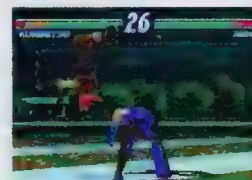
Also recommended:
DISRUPTOR
NANOTEK WARRIOR
SHELLSHOCK
MECH WARRIOR 2
KRAZY IVAN
DOOM

BEAT 'EM-UP



STAR GLADIATOR

Capcom deliver the goods with this stunning butt-kicker, obviously influenced by the likes of Star Wars. Complex combos and hidden features increase the attraction.



TEKKEN 2

Namco's classic face-slapper is still an excellent game, and a worthwhile purchase for anyone with a PlayStation. You simply must own a copy of this game. It's the law.



SOUL BLADE

Namco fill in time between the launch of Tekken 3 with this pant-wettingly-good beat 'em up. It's basically Tekken 2 with sticks, fancy backgrounds and all your usual hidden gubbings.



TEKKEN

Tekken 2's slightly uglier younger brother was the game that got us all excited about the PSX in the first place and is now available as part of the Platinum range for just £19.99.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Capcom extend their Street Fighter family tree again as the world holds it breath for SF3. As 2D fighting goes, Capcom know their onions and this is solid evidence of the fact.

Also recommended:
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY
TOSHINDEN 2
VICTORY BOXING
DARKSTALKERS
ZERO DIVIDE
CRITICOM



INT. TRACK & FIELD

Konami's finger-bruising Olympic multi-player is the sports game to own in our humble opinion, and it will give you and your chums hours of competitive fun – guaranteed.



SMASH COURT TENNIS

Namco's PlayStation twist on the old SNES classic is certainly the best tennis game around at present. It may look quite basic, but the gameplay is pumped up to the max.



SOCCER 97

EIDOS improve Olympic Soccer with the inclusion of real UK teams and players, plus a handful of new features too. The only football game worth bothering with – fact!



MADDEN 97

American football isn't all that popular over here, but John Madden's run of gridiron updates via EA continue to hit the charts with maximum impact. This is no exception.



TOTAL NBA 96

Enhanced 3D viewpoints and excellent gameplay are among the plus points of Sony's hoop slapping spectacular, although the 97 remix is sure to take its place in our chart next month.

Also recommended:

NHL FACEOFF
NFL GAMEDAY
ACTUA GOLF
STRIKER 96
NBA JAM EXTREME
ACTUA SOCCER



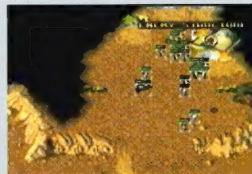
WORMS

Basic, simplistic and hellishly addictive, Team 17's PSX debut is the business. Buy this and you and your friends will spend hours in the fabulous multi-player mode.



X COM: T.F.T.D.

Hunt aliens under the sea in this, the second installment of the strategy-fuelled extra terrestrial adventure from MicroProse. Very technical, but very rewarding too.



COMMAND & CONQUER

A beautiful conversion for the PSX which is presented in a two CD format, allowing you to choose between the good or the bad guys as you wage war on the world.



SIM CITY 2000

Maxis finally release one of their many 'Sim...' titles for the PlayStation, and it is everything you could wish for. Build stuff, sell stuff, build more stuff, burn stuff etc.



X COM: ENEMY UNKNOWN

MicroProse's original X Com title is just as good as its sequel listed above, offering plenty of X Files-esque fun as you hunt for aliens yet again. Only this time on dry land.

Also recommended:

THEME PARK
SPACE HULK
WARHAMMER
AIV EVOLUTION GLOBAL
PANZER GENERAL
TRANSPORT TYCOON



TOMB RAIDER

Indiana Jones-esque mission starring the wonderful Lara Croft and her multi-directional talents. It's huge, it's tasking and it's a bugger to complete, but it's also bloody brilliant.



RESIDENT EVIL

Zombie-squashing horror quest from Capcom that started a videogaming revolution. Choose between two heroes as you wander a huge mansion battling the undead.



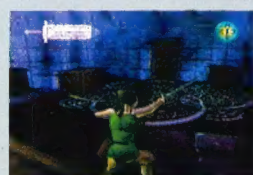
LEGACY OF KAIN

Top class vampire mayhem from BMG Interactive. This game is truly massive, offering gamers hours and hours of mystical blood-letting fun and excitement.



BROKEN SWORD

A very cartoony point-and-click detective adventure which was originally a hit on the PC. This is very addictive to say the least, although its loading times can sometimes annoy.

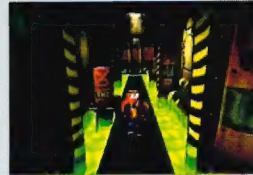


EXCALIBUR 2555 A.D.

Vicky The Viking meets Tomb Raider in Telstar's greatest PSX release to date. The graphics may not be as sharp as Tomb Raiders, but the action is every bit as thrilling.

Also recommended:

FADE TO BLACK
A.I.T.D: JACK'S BACK!
DISC WORLD
KING'S FIELD
TIME COMMANDO



CRASH BANDICOOT

Sony's new hero is a class act in our book, and as far as platform games go, this is the best of the bunch. It's certainly colourful, extremely playable and simply must be bought.



PANDEMONIUM

Pseudo 3-D run and jump affair from the blokes at BMG, which takes the two dimensional platform game one step further with its gorgeous graphics and quirky characters. Top stuff.



RAYMAN

UBISoft's cute and colourful kiddy-pleaser has been popular with us since the PlayStation's launch, and can still hold its own against most of today's platform offerings.



JUMPING FLASH 2

Polygon bionic bunny action from Sony which gives the genre a novel twist, thanks to its bizarre 3-D viewpoint and its ability to allow the player to jump up and up and up and up!



MICKEY MANIA

This interactive life story of the Disney figurehead is aimed squarely at the younger gamer, although its enjoyable Disney charms will surely entice the odd mature platform fan.

Also recommended:

EARTHWORM JIM 2
JUMPING FLASH
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE
GEX
FLOATING RUNNER
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD



FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2

Revamped 16bit chopper chaos from Core Design.

Also recommended:

BLACK DAWN
GUNSHIP 2000
AGILE WARRIOR

PUZZLE



3-D LEMMINGS

Save the video game icons once again – but in 3-D!



BUST A MOVE 2

Balloon-bursting fun that's more addictive than oxygen.

Also recommended...

BLAST CHAMBER
BUBBLE BOBBLE
HEBEREKE POPPOITTO

MISCELLANEOUS



DIE HARD TRILOGY

Three games, all based on the Bruce Willis movies. Truly excellent in every way.

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB

Interactive pinball for those who can't play it in real life.

Also recommended:

NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 1
WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS

GAMES TO AVOID

AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY
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2XTREME
CHESSMASTER 3D
ROAD RAGE

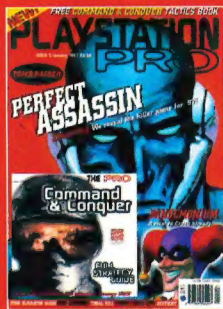
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ISSUE SIX
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NEXT MONTH



Tiger Shark

GT's submarine 'em-up is finally 'up periscope' for official review.

And it's looking large

The Need For Speed 2

The driving flavour continues as we put Electronic Arts' split-screen tyre squealer under the review microscope (honest, it does this time)

Test Drive: Off Road

This fabulous 4x4 fest has gone down a treat in America. We're a lot more discerning, though. Find out what it's really like next month



Nightmare Creatures

Mindscape looks to have done a good bit of business with French development hommes Kalisto. Find out why in the first full review

Pro Pinball: Timeshock

Rather than go out to the pub/arcade, spend loads of money and risk getting glassed by some pissed-up thug, buy this perfect pinball sim



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ALSO NEXT MONTH...

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SF III

VR Baseball

Space Jam

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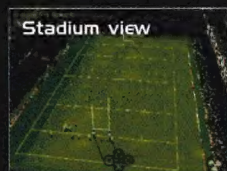
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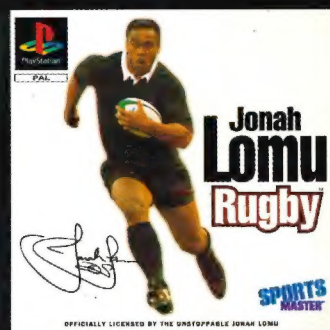
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